Oral Sources in Translation: 19th-Century and Contemporary Perspectives on Translating Orality

by

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Declaration of material presented elsewhere
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References and bibliography
The MLA reference system (6th edition) has been followed for references and bibliography. In addition:
- for in-text references, year of publication is provided;
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List of abbreviation (in alphabetical order)

KHM	*Kinder- und Hausmärchen*
SL	Source Language
ST	Source Text
TL	Target Language
TS	Translation Studies
TT	Target Text

Note
All translations from vernacular, all pictures and all drawings are my own, unless otherwise specified.

ABSTRACT

Two widely used reference points in Translation Studies are the notions of source and target, indicating a point of departure and a point of arrival in the translating process. This thesis takes the notion of source as a starting point and observes what happens when one introduces a variation in the early stages of the process. Specifically, it argues that by modifying the perception of the source, i.e. the way one sees and consider the source, the resulting translation changes as well. By "perception" one wants to stress that the source in question is a constant and does not actually change; what varies is the way one conceives of it. The framework chosen to verify this hypothesis is the translation of orality into different media, i.e. paper, magnetic, electronic or digital media. Translation is here not merely intended as the act of transferring material from one language into another, but has been expanded to include the intralingual passage from oral to a different form. The source is examined from two different perspectives. One, located in 19th century England and Italy, identifies the source of orality in a collective entity, called "folk" in England and "*popolo*" in Italy. The other perspective, taking place in current times and drawing inspiration from performance-oriented approaches to orality, focuses on individuals and their personal performances. Taking into account linguistic, historical, political, social and economic factors, the thesis argues that these two perspectives have affected the translations of oral material, giving space alternatively to the voice of a collectivity or that of an individual. Translating orality thus emerges as a process influenced by the attitude of translators, whose "perceptions" underscore their decision-making role.

INTRODUCTION

> I want so much to know whether they've a fire in the winter: you never *can* tell, you know, unless our fire smokes, and then the smoke comes up in that room too – but that may be only pretence, just to make it look as if they had a fire. Well then, the books are something like our books, only the words go the wrong way...
>
> Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871/1982, p.127)

Alice's adventures through the looking glass begin with a series of considerations that are based on her experience of a reality which is familiar to her, that of the house she lives in. Alice applies this experience to something that is unfamiliar, the world beyond the mirror, and in doing so she wonders whether in this unknown world she may be able to find familiar things, like a fire or books. Soon, however, she realises that the room in the mirror appears like the one she is living in, but may not be quite the same, it "may be only pretence". Immediately after, what is familiar clashes with the unfamiliar, and the latter becomes "the wrong way", where "wrong" acquires meaning in reference to familiar categories. Despite (or maybe thanks to) her effort to familiarise unfamiliar categories, Alice's questions about life in the mirror start to go beyond expectations based on known reality and Alice realises that "... it may be quite different on beyond" (1982, p.127). Her feeling that a possibly unfamiliar context may exist in the mirror gives her a more open attitude and makes her want to explore such a context. Then the mirror acquires a gas-like texture and allows Alice to walk through. Once that solidity is overcome, the mirror shows a reality which is only superficially specular, but in which the established order is subverted and any expectation falls. Alice at the beginning still retains some of her mental categories and what she first sees in the room beyond the mirror is a mixture of familiar objects

and oddities, like pictures apparently alive or a grinning clock. From that moment on, Alice explores unknown territories, meeting all sort of characters: anthropomorphous chessmen, speaking flowers, strange insects, egg-like creatures, and what not, interacting with them as if their existence were nothing to wonder at, and treating them as part of her familiar categories.[1]

Alice's adventures share several aspects with the topic of this thesis. Familiarity and unfamiliarity are two categories that, as in *Through the Looking-glass*, are connected by the "mirror" of translation, which (when the process is activated) stops reflecting a familiar image and, through its gas-like texture, allows the translator (Alice) to walk into the unfamiliar. Furthermore, the above quoted passage brings into the limelight a relevant element for this thesis. When the fire smokes in Alice's house, it says, the smoke comes up in the other room, too. But unless there is a fire in her house, there cannot be one in the room reflected by the mirror. In other words, to have fire there, there must be a source of origin for that fire. The keywords here are *translation* (Alice going through the mirror) and *source* (the fire in one room being reflected in "another room").

This thesis investigates the translation[2] of orality, specifically mediated orality,[3] into a different form (paper, magnetic, electronic or digital). The reason for choosing this topic is the idea that by modifying the perception of the source, the resulting translation, if performed, changes as well. The idea of investigating sources was taken from Translation Studies (henceforth, TS), a discipline that numbers among its

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[1] For instance, Alice helps the White Queen wear a shawl and tidy her hair as she would do for any woman, without finding it strange to dress and comb a chessman (1982, p.173).

[2] As will be discussed in chapter 1, section 1.2., in this thesis the term "translation" refers to the passage, within the same language, from oral to written (or magnetic/electronic) form. It is here believed that, far from being a simple and unproblematic recording of words, this passage, often and in my opinion superficially called "transcription", involves mechanisms that reflect a real translating process. The term "translation" is therefore used here to refer to such passage. When the term is used to indicate the passage from one language to another, source or target language are specified, or the expression "interlingual translation" is used.

basic concepts the notion of "source" and "target", which in a dynamic context highlight the "start" and the "arrival" points of the translation process.[4] Expanding the concept of source beyond a textual context, the underlying theme, or rather the element one seeks to emphasise here is exactly the *source of orality*, in other words its originator. "Source" therefore here does not refer to a text, but rather to those who produce orality, in other words narrators, storytellers, performers, in fact, oral sources. The act of "recording" on paper, audiotape, videotape, digital or electronic media the words of these sources is seen as an act of translation.[5] It is important to underline that the variation hypothetically resulting in different translations does not refer to the nature of sources, but rather to the way they are perceived by observers. These observers, who are in the last analysis those who translate orality, operate a change within translation, giving the impression that they are translating from different sources, when in fact what changes is their attitude. Thus, this thesis investigates the potential for a variety of translations resulting from different attitudes towards oral sources.

In order to explore this hypothesis, a juxtaposition of two different ways of seeing the sources of orality has been assumed as point of departure. One way looks at an idealised "creature", a collectivity seen as a repository of national heritage, the other seeks to foreground the individual as the ultimate source of orality. The collective facet of such dualism is examined by looking at two specific entities, the English "folk" and the Italian "*popolo*", both within the framework of 19th-century perspectives. It will be first of all argued that these entities were not corroborated by

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[3] I.e. transferred on a specific medium but also influenced by various media. See chapter 1, section 1.1., for a discussion of this term.

[4] The use of a terminology reminiscent of a race is based upon Anthony Pym's idea (1992) that translation also operates on the material transfer (spatial and temporal) of texts (see p.17 onwards). In her novel *Sogni mancini* (1996), Francesca Duranti sees translation as an operation of ferrying across, saying that one of her characters, a translator, "si guadagna da vivere traghettando parole da una lingua all'altra..." (126).

their respective realities, as political, economic, social, and cultural changes moulded rather different societies. In their role as symbols of glory, "folk" and "*popolo*" came to represent a sort of magic hat out of which folklore elements were pulled to be transformed into the pride of a nation, transforming "folklore"[6] into a collective property where the individual performer did not count, except as a mere vehicle for the transmission of such heritage. This view of the "sources" of folklore has had repercussions on the way oral material has been collected, widening the "divide" between the oral and the written. Ruth Finnegan (1988) rejects the "great divide" between orality and literacy, noting that such antithesis has no sense in a world where the oral and the written often overlap or go hand in hand (141). Yet this dualism proved to be a widespread perspective in 19th-century approaches to an orality that was viewed as "folklore", i.e. the lore of a community somehow lost in the bucolic landscapes of a vanishing past (England) or the regional variety that formed a newly unified nation (Italy). The reasons behind this notion are identified in the need for a national heritage expressing the genuine spirit of a nation and contributing to reinforce the nation itself by creating a steady foundation. Specifically, how England[7] and Italy have resorted to their oral heritage as a way to strengthen a sense of nationhood and the richness of their traditions will be considered. Therefore, by examining the sources of orality as an anonymous collectivity, it may be possible to identify the reasons that led 19th-century collectors to search for a national-popular heritage and to collect specimens of what has been labelled as "folklore". Secondly, the results of this way of seeing oral sources will be

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[5] Chapter 1, section 1.2., also discusses the perceived differences between "transcription", often used to indicate the intralingual passage from oral to written form, and "translation".

[6] For a discussion on the implications of this term, see chapter 1, section 1.1.1.

[7] With this term one refers to the geopolitical area in which the British folklorists and folklore collectors discussed in chapter 3 operated in the 19th century. The folklore, history, politics and society of 19th-century Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales have not been objects of analysis in this thesis.

considered. Viewing oral sources as "folk" or "*popolo*", in other words as a collective entity merely repeating folklore elements, led to the belief that these sources did not count individually and that therefore any individual indicator of orality was not to be retained in translation. As a consequence, 19th-century folklore collections present a common denominator: the absence, in their translation, of any trace of individuality. One may object that reproducing oral features was not feasible in the 19th century, considering the lack of recording devices. However, the existence of such features and their intimately individual nature were acknowledged (see chapter 3, section 3.1.2.). Hence, one can legitimately assume that, if these elements had been considered important, they would have appeared along with texts, one way or another. For instance, chapter 5 (section 5.2.2.) describes various attempts to render verbal and nonverbal features on paper through graphic signs. Though it is true that these stratagems have been facilitated by the use of tape or video-recorders, which allowed one to listen to a narration several times and to become more and more aware of the peculiarities of a specific narrator, this alone cannot be seen as the key factor for coming up with such solutions. The reason for the absence of oral features in 19th-century folklore collections will be therefore mainly identified through the specific way of viewing their sources, i.e. from a perspective that conceived of these sources as mere repositories of a collective heritage.

The second area examined in this thesis will be individuality in orality. In order to do so, verbal and nonverbal features will be discussed, stressing the fact that these features, though present in any narrator, are characterised by an individuality that becomes a hallmark of orality. By emphasising these features, one acknowledges that behind a narration there is an individual, who can be credited with giving that narration a specific imprint. In this sense, the individual can be seen as an oral source. The idea of exploring individuality in orality and of conceiving of oral

sources as individuals has been inspired by performance-oriented approaches to orality.[8] Despite the fact that these approaches focus mainly on how to render verbal and nonverbal features (rather than on sources), they nevertheless contributed to highlight the role of individuals in narrative performance, thus representing a good starting point for exploring the translation of such narratives and the implications arising from the role that narrators play.

Two conclusions may be drawn from this analysis. Firstly, it will be argued that perceiving oral sources as individuals results in the production of translations that are divergent from 19th-century folklore collections. It will be suggested that, especially within performance-oriented approaches, individuality in orality means trying to find a way to reproduce verbal and nonverbal features, considered an integral part of a performance. However, it will also be noted that not all translations give these features the same importance. Although the presence in a translation of verbal and nonverbal features is in itself an indicator of an increased attention to the individual, the passage from collectivity to individuality cannot be marked only by these elements. Hence, several different approaches to translating orality onto the page and in multimedia will be presented, showing that individuality can be expressed in various ways. It will be also argued that the diversity inherent in these approaches is the result of a different point of departure, i.e. of a different intended goal. Comparing different approaches, arguing for or against one over the other, does not therefore lead to a useful conclusion, as it tends to neglect the specificity and

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[8] Born out of a need to find a different (from a text-centred perspective) way to represent the multidimensionality of Native American oral narratives on paper, performance-oriented approaches (that later gave birth to the discipline of ethnopoetics) underline the fact that orality is produced by the interaction of verbal and nonverbal features, as well as by social, contextual and cultural elements. Hence, transferring only words to the page would mean reproducing only part of the whole phenomenon (one could see it as a partial translation). Performance-oriented approaches have called for more attention to oral aesthetics and for methods that could represent a performance event in all its features, in order to make such performances available to a wider audience. Despite its problems, such an approach has nevertheless contributed to an increased awareness of the complexity of oral narratives and of their artistic nature. See also Bendix 1997, pp.194-205.

diversity of goals. This perspective will be supported with Hans Vermeer's skopos theory,[9] noting that this could provide an answer to the discrepancies among the various approaches. To put it in concrete terms, if one establishes *a priori* that the only correct way to translate orality means to believe that any medium whatsoever freezes the word and that the only possible solution (albeit partial) is to give relevance to its nonverbal aspects, one will be necessarily bound to disregard or criticise translations that do not take these aspects into account. On the contrary, by adopting a functional stance, one acknowledges that there may be a different skopos behind a particular choice, and that such choice cannot be simply dismissed as "bad translation", because it responds to an intention established before the translation was carried out. If one can have multiple skopoi, then there are instances in which translating orality does not mean freezing it, but rather combining it with the target medium in order to obtain a different product. Translating orality can therefore also mean giving origin to an encounter between oral and written where both modes re-emerge slightly transformed in their nature, having exchanged with one another some of their constituent elements. Metaphorically speaking, one may have some woollen yarn and some silk. As long as they are yarns, they are separated, and one may think that being different they should not be mixed together; yet blends are possible and wool blended with silk produces an excellent fabric. Similarly, by "weaving" together the oral and the written, we can see that the two elements still retain their nature (as wool and silk do), but that they interact with each other and intertwine to create a blended product that, in some cases, represents a valuable product.

It has been said that exploring individuality in orality led to two conclusive considerations. As a matter of fact, a third one took shape. Shifting attention from

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[9] Born towards the end of the 1970s, skopos theory rejects a purely linguistic approach to translation and prefers to concentrate on contextual elements that may influence the process, in particular the

collectivity to individuality highlights the responsibility that individual narrators take for their own production. Viewing orality as produced by a single individual (instead of a collective body) raises questions that may recall written works. If performers produce a piece of oral material, then one is bound to wonder to what extent they are *responsible* for that piece of orality. A high level of responsibility may in turn lead us to ask whether these individuals can be considered as the authors of what they have produced, as well as whether they own the orality they produce. The question of authorship/ownership is rather complex and perhaps it cannot be solved, unless one decides to examine specific cases (i.e. a piece of formal narrative, an account of a personal event, a joke, a proverb, a piece of gossip, etc.), as these present different degrees of authorship/ownership. However, one can identify a common aspect in these instances of orality: they are all vocally produced by an individual. The idea is therefore that in all types of orality a degree of authorship is traceable in the act of performing carried out by a single individual.

This thesis is mainly concerned about sources, to draw attention to the role of the translator. The beginning of Alice's adventures through the looking-glass is, precisely, a mirror. The mirror initially reflects a familiar environment, Alice's house. Then, slowly, the familiar is transformed into the unfamiliar, but not by the mirror. Like a translation, the mirror reflects (and sometimes hides) the unfamiliar, but the "activator" of such process is not the mirror itself. Rather, the activator is the person who is willing to cross over into the unfamiliar and who is able to "see" the unfamiliar behind. Alice perceives the unfamiliar behind the mirror; her specific way of seeing it gives shape to a series of adventures that are her own. Similarly, perceiving oral sources as endowed with a collective or individual nature may influence a resulting translation strictly depending on the perceiver. Specifically,

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nature of the recipient and the commissioner, as well as the function that the final product is to have

translating orality may be seen as directly affected by the perception of its sources, perception which will determine, as it did with Alice, the future steps of the perceiver.

Methodologically speaking, this thesis uses theories and perspectives taken from TS, a relatively young discipline[10] whose roots have found a fertile, nourishing ground in various other disciplines, from linguistics (including psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and ethnolinguistics)[11] to literary and cultural studies. Having benefited from the encounter with other fields of research, TS has been able to produce a variety of theories[12] and concepts to identify and explain what takes place in that particular type of transfer named translation. TS has proved to be a prolific and versatile field, and one that can be happily married to areas of research beyond a mere comparative analysis of languages. In this thesis, the marriage takes place between TS and orality,[13] this latter an already wide field on its own. Also, the thesis has been structured in a way that recalls the partition of a symphony. With its emphasis on sound, an oral narrative may be interpreted as a "vocal symphony". However, the main reason behind this decision is that the chapters, arranged in this way, perform a function similar to that of the various parts of a symphony.

The **Prelude**, intended as an instrumental work preceding a larger composition, is here represented by chapter 1. Chapter 1 is "instrumental" in that it provides the

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(Schäffner 1998, p.235).

[10] Though contributions to a theory of translation are present throughout history, scholars generally acknowledge that an increased number of contributions and the birth of TS as an independent discipline took place in the last decades. See e.g. Munday 2001, p.5; Venuti 2000, p.1; Baker 1998, pp.277-79; Lvóvskaya 1997, p.3; Snell-Hornby 1995, p.2; Bassnett and Lefevere 1990, p. ix.

[11] Mary Snell-Hornby (1995) notes how in the 1970s pragmatics brought an important contribution to TS, also through the influence of related disciplines like language philosophy. and others like psychology and sociology (68).

[12] Munday 2001 provides a chronological overview of influential contributions to TS.

[13] Alongside TS theories it has been useful to resort to the vast field of folkloristics and folklore collections which, when combined with social and historical perspectives, provide the foundation for chapters 2, 3 and 6. Chapter 4 benefits from the help of psychology and discourse analysis, as well as

basic "instruments" for the comprehension of the thesis. These instruments are the two most often used words here: "orality" and "translation". The chapter therefore illustrates the intended meaning of the two terms *within* this thesis and argues for a reconsideration of both, providing reasons for expanding and/or modifying their standard meaning.

In its central part, this thesis is articulated in two "movements". As in a symphony, each of these movements can be seen as a complete and self-contained part which, however, has also to be viewed within a larger setting. The **1st movement**, containing chapters 2 and 3, deals with folklore and collectivity, i.e. the above discussed first facet of the dualism juxtaposing collective and individual sources. The chapters are based on two geographical areas, England and Italy in the 19th century,[14] and examine the creation and evolution of the notion of "folk" and "*popolo*", respectively, as well as their production ("folklore"). Chapter 2 seeks to underline the divergence of two elements, one identified as the source of orality, or rather "folklore", whereas the other represents the actual (albeit intentionally ignored) incarnation of such source. The chapter analyses social and structural developments in the 19th century and the emergence of the image of "folk" or "*popolo*" that was created through folklore collections and studies. Both areas developed a notion of folklore as coming from an idealised source.[15] Chapter 3 investigates attitudes towards folklore collections, by and large characterised by the absence of any attempt to consider features belonging to and identifying orality, strictly linked to its individual performer. However, a movement towards individuality is detectable, too.

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from the use of illustrative materials in the form of recorded oral narratives. Finally, chapter 5 reintroduces the co-operation of TS and oralist approaches.

[14] If on the one hand interest in folklore certainly spans more than two centuries, on the other it is also true that the 19th century saw its growth and its development into a science. This thesis considers the 19th century not as a starting point for folklore investigations, but as an important milestone in the development of concepts like folk and national identity.

For this reason, the chapter focuses on the introductory notes to these collections, as these have proved to be particularly rich in reflections on the nature of the collected material and the methods followed for its translation.

The **2nd movement**, comprising chapters 4 and 5, discusses the perception of oral sources as characterised by individuality (hinted at towards the end of the first movement). Chapter 4 presents a series of verbal and nonverbal features that form oral discourse and become a visible mark of individuality. The chapter draws from a range of disciplines such as discourse analysis and psychology, making use of examples taken from tape-recorded narratives, which contain an array of audible verbal and nonverbal elements. It also seeks to exemplify and comment on visual elements. Chapter 5 takes into account the link between individual performers and orality, presenting different approaches to the translation of the latter. The translation of orality into a different medium, be it the printed page, or magnetic, digital or electronic forms, implies some kind of loss that can be, although only partially, made up for by stressing specific features.[16] The chapter also seeks a possible solution to a dualistic vision of the oral and the written, and suggests a perspective in which the oral and the written intertwine, where the oral "fertilises" the written in a process of hybridisation.

Finally, as in a piece of music, a conclusive part prolonging and re-elaborating the two movements was needed. This part is the **coda**, here represented by chapter 6. The chapter takes up again the collective/individual juxtaposition and presents it in the light of an individuality that calls for a reappropriation of oral material on behalf of performers. This chapter intends to lay emphasis on this reappropriation (seen as

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[15] As Regina Bendix (1997) puts it, "the notion of 'the folk' as an anonymous mass harbouring and passing on tradition permitted such disembodied notions of expressive culture, as did the social distance between those studied – the peasantry – and the researchers" (194).

[16] For instance, a videotape can convey images and sounds, but exactly because of this it does not put as much emphasis on voice features as an audiotape does.

authorship) because it implies a departure from the self-contained isolation of both oral and written modes. By introducing and insisting on the idea of authorship in orality, the relativity of oral and written, as well as their mutual influence, is highlighted. Taking a concept that has traditionally been the domain of written literature and applying it to orality here suggests that the "great divide" is something that can be overcome in favour of a different, possibly more holistic, approach. The 19th-century collectivity then evolves into a perspective where orality is a product of individuals and individuals become authors, and, as such, orality is able to enter a territory from which it had been precluded.

Prelude

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ON "TRANSLATING ORALITY": TERMINOLOGY

> Everything in these song-poems is finally translatable: words, sounds, voice, melody, gesture, event, etc., in the reconstitution of a unity that would be shattered by approaching each element in isolation. A full & total experience begins it, which only a total translation can fully bring across.
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> Jerome Rothenberg, "Total Translation: An Experiment in the Presentation of American Indian Poetry" (1983, p. 392)

Jerome Rothenberg advocates a translation process in which the source element, in this case Navajo songs, is conveyed in a foreign language together with all its components: words, sounds, music. Like several other scholars concentrating on performance,[1] Rothenberg highlights the problems and potentialities of translating orality into print, laying emphasis on performers.[2] Yet, Rothenberg seems to take for granted that the problem lies in translating Navajo songs into a different language (English) or, in Roman Jakobson's terms, interlingual translation.[3] Intralingual translation, or transcription, seems to be unproblematic.

As mentioned in the introduction, this thesis aims to highlight how, by changing the perception of sources, the aspect of the correlated translation changes as well. The area chosen for investigation is the passage from oral to written/magnetic/electronic form. This choice has proven appropriate for the above mentioned hypothesis, and for two reasons. First of all, by excluding the passage from one language to another

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[1] For a brief description of performance-oriented approaches, see Introduction.

[2] Chapter 5 deals in more detail with such a perspective. For a discussion of the possible implications that emphasis on performers presents, see also chapter 6, esp. section 6.2.

[3] Following Jakobson, terms like intralingual and interlingual are often used here, as Jakobson's approach and the usability of his division in this context is later discussed.

(e.g. from A to B), one excludes an element requiring further analyses on its own (therefore at the expense of clarity for the main hypothesis here presented). Secondly, one wishes to underline the fact that a translation within the same language (e.g. from A to A_1) is not as unproblematic and mechanical as the idea of "transcription" may suggest; on the contrary, it is also influenced by the way one perceives the source.

Two words, *orality* and *translation*, are predominant in this thesis and require discussion. As far as the former is concerned, in the broad field studying oral phenomena a conspicuous number of terms have been used, misused, abandoned, retained. Section 1.1.1. presents a review of the most commonly used terms, together with the pros and cons they are associated with. In addition, this section seeks to explain the reasons behind the choice of the term "orality", also considering the possibilities previously mentioned. Orality is not, however, the sole term used in this thesis. Chapters 2 and 3 make extensive use of the term "folklore"; section 1.1.1 explains why. The second important term of this thesis, "translation", is investigated using Roman Jakobson's linguistic theory and terminology, but departing from it to endorse the idea that translation is a phenomenon affected by various concomitant and mutually influencing factors, of which language is but one. This section therefore views translated orality from a perspective that takes into account, but seeks to go beyond linguistic approaches. Perspectives such as Rothenberg's mentioned above are useful in that they draw attention to the complexity of this particular type of translation. However, they are somehow misleading, because they show a tendency to belittle the complexity of the intralingual passage from oral to print (or magnetic/electronic media), a complexity that, it is here believed, is due to different perceptions of oral sources and can be seen as an act of translation. Considering this, it is felt that using the term "transcription" may encourage a

distorted view of such passage, ignoring the transformations oral material undergoes even without switching language.[4] Thus, section 1.2. examines the problems and inconsistencies in the term "transcription" and advocates the use of the term "translation" for the intralingual conversion of oral material into different media.

1.1. ORALITY

1.1.1. One thing, many names

Several terms have been used to refer to the output of human verbal production; their diversity may be pointing to slightly different areas, but it also responds to reasons that are more ideological[5] than purely terminological. Among them, the most widely used and discussed is probably **oral literature**.[6] A quite common term in the past, it has been the object of criticism for what some view as an oxymoron, i.e. the co-presence, side by side, of two opposing qualities, the oral and the written. Among those advocating the impossibility of such co-existence is Walter Ong, who bases his criticism on etymological grounds. As he points out, "literature" is based on Latin *lĭttera*, originally meaning letter of the alphabet and later indicating any text made with these letters (1967, p.21; 1982, p.10). The etymology of "literature" emphasises the semantic domain of letters and therefore "oral literature" would contain a contradiction, in that it refers to the product of orality, while at the same time

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[4] Considering the widespread use of the term "transcription", one acknowledges that using "translation" to indicate the intralingual passage from oral to written form or to any type of medium may appear hazardous. Nevertheless, one also believes in the "mouldable" nature of words, provided that the action of moulding is sufficiently justified.

[5] E.J. Bakker (1997) identifies two uses of "oral", one simply referring to spoken discourse without any further implication (medial sense), another containing a cultural value (conceptual sense); the latter is generally implied in phrases like "oral poetry", where the point is not merely to describe such a phenomenon, but rather to ascribe it to a culture which is different from that of writing (7).

[6] Among the numerous instances in which the phrase "oral literature" is present, see: Soriano 1968; Jason 1969; Kellogg 1973; Bamya 1984; Raffel 1986; Krupat 1987; Petrone 1990; Finnegan 1996; Gyasi 1998.

seemingly implying its belonging to the written field.[7] Thus, there would be a paradox in the fact of indicating something that is meant to be heard by using a terminology which refers to something meant to be read (Bauman 1986, p.1). To explain this contradiction, Ong (1982) suggests that, in literate societies, thinking of words as independent entities dissociated from writing is psychologically threatening (14), probably because the conscious mind needs to refer to familiar categories in order to process new information.[8] Ong notes that "thinking of oral tradition… as 'oral literature' is rather like thinking of horses as automobiles without wheels" (ibid., p.12). Following his argument, "oral" would tend to be understood as "not written" rather than as "product of speech". Defining orality by its non-essence suggests its dependence on writing and presents a further ambiguity, because saying that something is not X does not automatically say what it is. In other words, as Ong says, "in the end, horses are only what they are not" (1982, p.12).[9] Furthermore, "oral literature" would be ethnocentrically biased, implying that orality is a sort of by-product derived from literacy (Ong 1967, p.21). The expression has nevertheless also received approval. Cristina Lavinio (1993) for instance chooses to support the use of "*letteratura orale*" because focusing exclusively on etymological reasons could result in an exceedingly precise attitude ("un eccesso di pedanteria", p.8).[10] Lavinio agrees with Ruth Finnegan (1992), who warns against excessively stressing etymology, since the argument is restrictive, culture-bound and could evoke west-

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[7] Ong (1982) notes that the problems of using "oral literature" parallel those surrounding the term "preliterate". This term refers to orality in terms of what it is not, since it takes the word "literate" as a touchstone, as if this represented the norm and not the consequence of a specific cultural development (13).

[8] According to Ruth Finnegan (1970), the concept of oral literature can be seen as "...an unfamiliar one to most people brought up in cultures which… lay stress on the idea of literacy and written tradition" (1).

[9] A point shared by E.J. Bakker (1997), who notes how phrases involving "oral" have developed in literate contexts and, as such, "they define speech as the construction of a writing culture that uses its own absence to define its opposite".

[10] Similarly, Richard Bauman (1986) sees etymology as a weak basis on which to develop a criticism of the term (1).

centred preconceptions[11] (9). From this point of view, speaking of oral literature would suggest that literariness is not the exclusive domain of written documents and that it can be extended to different forms of art (Lavinio 1993. p.8). In 1970 Finnegan had opted for the use of "oral literature", urged by a concern to show that oral products are entitled to literary status; she suggested that the association between literature and writing is an arbitrary one and that all the aspects of literature, intended as a wider and more abstract entity, cannot fit into such a restrictive idea (15-16). In 2000 she acknowledged that the expression "oral literature" is not entirely free from bias, yet she chose to keep supporting it, because it was "... useful in focusing on the literary qualities shared between the many literatures of the world... while 'oral' draws attention to additional discussions raised in active performance" (115). Furthermore, regarding orality as literature is by no means a recent phenomenon, since the texts recorded by early fieldworkers (missionaries and ethnographers) were considered literary products: "many of those working in this field in the nineteenth century, however, were quite clear on the point. The term 'literature' appears in the titles of books or sections" (Finnegan 1970, p.31).[12] Nevertheless, although etymology alone is not a sufficient reason for discarding "oral literature" altogether, it is indeed difficult to separate literature from the idea of written material. Using Native American material as a reference point, Paul Zolbrod (1995) takes issue with the label of "literature", arguing that Native American oral traditions are still a product of the voice even when reproduced on the page, and therefore a better term should be used instead (1). Because it is not meant to be read but rather to be listened

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[11] Finnegan (1992) is referring to English language (9).

[12] Despite the concern to reveal the literary status of orality by defining it "oral literature" however, one cannot avoid wondering why, if its status as literary work is accepted, the adjective "oral" must precede the term. Following Ong's examples of horses as automobiles without wheels, one could infer that oral literature is not real literature, or the adjective oral would have been omitted. The concept of literature as an entity embracing all forms of verbal art, including orality, would work in a better way if it was not used in opposition to one of those forms (in this case orality itself). In other words literature, instead of being opposed to "oral literature" could be seen as a supra-entity of which the written and the oral are two subcategories.

to or performed, Native American orality cannot be called "literature", since "literature" is commonly associated[13] with print (ibid., p.5). Zolbrod therefore considers the term "literature" a restrictive one when applied to orality, because its connection with print technologies precludes the possibility of seeing oral material as a work of art (ibid., p.6). Hence, one can conclude that while Finnegan advocates the use of "oral literature" to give orality a legitimate literary status and to free it from any ethnocentric bias, Zolbrod refuses the term on the grounds that oral material does not need such a status, being perfectly dignified in its own right.

Oral literature is not the only term undergoing such criticism. **Oral text(s)**[14] for instance reflects, according to Walter Ong (1982), a similar bias, visible in the word "text" (13). Although acknowledging that the original meaning of "text" refers to the action of weaving, and therefore could be adapted to an oral context, Ong argues that the term is influenced by its use in writing (ibid.). According to Karin Barber (1999), the scriptocentric notion of text has the effect of freezing what is naturally fluid into an object, considerably limiting the rich field of orality (17).[15]On the contrary, adopting Paul Zumthor's definition of a text as "an organized linguistic sequence" which generally presupposes a graphic medium, Paul Zolbrod (1995) frees the term from its writing and print connotations, seeing it as a comprehensive term that can refer to *any* way of storing poetry, from print to electronic formats, to audio and video recordings (11).[16]

In order to escape, at least to some extent, the scriptocentric bias of "literature", one has also resorted to **oraliture/orature**[17]. Though recalling the phrase "oral

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[13] Though, as Zolbrod (1995) notes, this association is customary (6).
[14] A phrase also used by Fine 1984; Mattina 1987; Reeves-Ellington 1999; Murray and Rice 1999.
[15] Similarly, Ong (1982) suggests that "writing makes 'words' appear similar to things", in that by writing them down they can be seen and touched much like an object (11).
[16] And Norman Fairclough (2001) uses the term "text" for both the written and the oral, defining an oral text as "what is said in a piece of spoken discourse..." (20).
[17] Guerrero (2002) proposes "auralture" (208).

literature", these two terms represent a departure from this often-debated oxymoron, as each "... designates orality or the oral style and confers validity upon this type of discourse as a vehicle of knowledge and experience, similar to the validity of writing" (Petrilli and Ponzio 2001, p.99). The need to assert the status of some given oral material by defining it as "oral literature" would then have no reason to be, since "oraliture" or "orature" alone assert its validity. In addition, they do not seem to present the problem that Ong had raised, i.e. to define orality by what it is not.[18] According to Finnegan (1992), "orature" can be viewed as a parallel to *écriture* (16). This therefore would show no longer a contrast between literature and the subset "oral literature", somehow less influential, but a parallel between literature (written) and orature (oral).

Seeking an alternative to "oral literature" and seemingly more uneasy with the term "literature" than with the adjective "oral", Paul Zolbrod (1995) suggests the use of **oral poetry**, because it reunites and levels written and unwritten material, with a broader and less biased field of action than the term "literature" (7).[19] Poetry is, in Zolbrod's definition, "... the art form whose primary medium is language, whether written or spoken (or sung); whether recorded in print, on video or audio tape, or whether packaged in the human memory according to various mnemonic techniques" (ibid.). The term is viewed positively also by Dennis Tedlock (1983), who considers it as a way to escape the arbitrary association between orality and its alleged primitive nature (51).[20] Treating orality as dramatic poetry would help see those features considered "primitive" as "poetic" instead (ibid.). However, as discussed

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[18] Although in this case perhaps "orature" would be more helpful to avoid such problem, as somehow "oraliture" still bears a trace of "literature" in it.

[19] However, Gregory Nagy (1990) notes that "poetry" leaves out characteristics of orality that are included for instance in the word "song" (18).

[20] Such association is based upon comparisons made with written prose, which is regarded as "realistic" and opposed to orality being "full of fantasy", even though "when we encounter gross and unexplained distortions of reality in Yeats, for example, we are apt to call them not 'primitive' but 'dreamlike' or 'mystical' and to regard them as highly poetic" (Tedlock 1983, p.51).

above, this expression is not without complications. The more evident drawback is again the use of the culturally-biased adjective "oral". Evidence of this can be seen in Ruth Finnegan's definition of "oral poetry" as "... poems that are unwritten either because the cultures in which they occur are partially or wholly nonliterate... or because oral forms are cherished despite a population's overall literacy" (1992, p.119). Such definition emphasises not so much poetic features, but rather a construct originated in a literate environment, because it takes its unwritten characteristics as the distinguishing mark that makes "oral poetry" different from "poetry". Gregory Nagy (1990) points out that a distinction should not be made between "oral poetry" and "poetry", but rather between the latter and "written poetry", which would acquire a special meaning as opposed to the unmarked nature of (oral) poetry (18). Having said this however, Nagy also acknowledges that "*poetry* is by definition written poetry" and suggests that a wider view of the idea of poetry is needed in order to overcome these limiting concepts (ibid.; emphasis as in original).

In order to emphasise aesthetic qualities and seeking an alternative that could avoid the textual constraint given by the term "literature", **verbal art** has also been used (Finnegan 1992, p.10). Richard Bauman (1977) views "verbal art as performance", where performance is defined as "a mode of language use, a way of speaking" (11). However, if taken literally, "verbal art" presents some inconsistencies. The stress on words ("verbal") excludes nonverbal aspect of orality such as gestures (Finnegan 1992, p.11). In addition, "art" (as "tradition") presents blurred boundaries which make it difficult to distinguish what is art from what is not (ibid.).

Ethnopoetics may somehow be seen as a development of verbal art, because though part of the term includes "poetics", ethnopoetics, like verbal art, also bears a relation

to performance.[21] Indeed, Dennis Tedlock[22] (1992) defines it as the "... study of the verbal arts in a worldwide range of languages and cultures", where "... primary attention is given to the vocal-auditory channel of communication..." (81). Born in the United States[23] and first appearing in print in 1968, it was greeted by scholars stressing the importance of narrative performability (ibid.). Nevertheless, Ruth Finnegan (1992) points out that the term implies a focus on non-western peoples, as it refers to culturally specific material that is generally labelled as "ethnic" (16).[24]

Some terms tend to lay emphasis on a connection with the past. For instance, **oral tradition(s)**[25] appears to underscore the traditional character of orality. This approach is at the heart of the oral-formulaic school, pioneered by Milman Parry in the first decades of the 20th century and later continued by Albert B. Lord.[26] As far as the phrase is concerned, Ruth Finnegan (1992) notes that the term "tradition" is generally used with various meanings: to indicate a culture, a process, products or ideas transmitted, or its belonging to a community rather than to an individual (7). In this phrase, she suggests, both terms bring about problems, as "oral" retains a connotation of "primitive" or "marginal", and "tradition" is opposed to "modern" (2003, p.84). The phrase is also altogether vague; Finnegan (1992) notes that it could mean anything unwritten, from a narrative to a physical monument (6).

Folklore[27] somehow parallels "tradition" in its connotation of popular material preserved and handed down from the past.[28] Ruth Finnegan (1992) points out that the

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[21] See e.g. Hymes 1977 and 1994.
[22] Founder, together with Jerome Rothenberg, of the journal *Alcheringa/Ethnopoetics*.
[23] Evolving from performance-oriented approaches.
[24] Though Dennis Tedlock (1992) clarifies that the term refers to a "... *worldwide* range of languages and cultures" (81; emphasis added).
[25] "Oral traditions" also appears in Vansina 1985; Montenyohl 1993; Blaeser 1996; Evers and Toelken 1998; as well as being the title of the Missouri-based journal *Oral Tradition*.
[26] The oral-formulaic approach, used in the study of oral performances among Yugoslav poets ("singers"), aims to demonstrate how epics are orally composed without any help from writing or memorisation of texts, but only through the use, in performance, of expressive units called "formulas".
[27] Two major journals base their research on term "folklore": the *Journal of American Folklore* (American Folklore Society) and *Folklore* (Folklore Society, London).

term may still be biased by evolutionist connotations; phenomena like nursery rhymes, proverbs and riddles, when classified as folklore would risk being seen as relics from a distant past that no longer have a life of their own (12). On the contrary, despite acknowledging that the term "folk" has been widely used to designate peasants, villagers and similar social groups, Richard Bauman (1992) notes a shift in meaning towards a less homogeneous "ideal folk society" (35). Similarly, Zdenek Salzmann (1993) explains that "oral folklore is not a product of culture found only in tribal societies or among peasants..." (237). And Gillian Bennett (1993) further underlines how "academic folklorists today define their subject matter in a way which runs counter to popular conceptions of the field..." (77).[29] One could counter that the difficult heritage left by past approaches and above all its etymology still linger in the use of the term, the same way "oral literature" discussed above is marred by ever present etymological problems. There is no intention here to make etymology the cornerstone on which to base the evaluation of terms; however, one cannot deny that it does play an influential role in shaping perspectives (and Ong's argument proves it), to the point that even well-argued counter arguments look as if they are playing on the opponent's ground.[30]

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[28] According to Luigi Lombardi Satriani (1974), the term "folklore" avoids both the contempt of the Enlightenment and the excitement of Romanticism, because its meaning appears to be merely descriptive and devoid of implicit judgements (90). Nonetheless, Satriani also shows that a quick reading of the letter written in 1846 by William Thoms to the journal *Athenaeum* (see also chapter 3, section 3.1.2.) reveals that "folklore" is not entirely without connotations (ibid.). The very nature of 19th-century folkloristics tended to mark a gap between researchers and the object of their research, a gap that acquired a connotation of inferiority in contrast with the "educated" world (ibid., p.95). Lombardi Satriani notes that in Thoms's letter there is no reference to the idea that popular traditions can be still used to find answers in the present; on the contrary, they are simply considered as pieces of a distant mosaic (ibid., p.94). For a more detailed discussion on folklore and folk, see chapters 2 and 3, which together represent the 1st movement of this thesis, revolving around a 19th-century perspective that considered orality as the product of a vanishing past and of an idealised "folk". For an etymological discussion of the term "folklore", see chapter 6, section 6.1.1.

[29] On the other hand, Max Lüthi (1982) seems not to be touched by the problem, as he puts folklore and literature on the same level and maintains that "the folktale is pure literature and on this account alone cannot be primitive" (97).

[30] For instance, Finnegan's support of the phrase "oral literature" appears well-motivated and, though being formulated some decades ago, displays a holistic view of the notion of literature that is on the cutting edge. Yet, "oral literature" has not acquired more supporters during these decades: on the

This plethora of terms shows one fundamental thing, i.e. that by slightly modifying one's point of view, the oral phenomenon reveals some facets and hides others. For instance, the much discussed "oral literature" brings to the surface a connection between orality and written literature, which is mostly ignored in "verbal art", where emphasis is mainly on aesthetics and vocal skills. "Oral tradition" on the other hand reveals a facet that refers to the past and to oral transmission from generation to generation within a given community. Interestingly, these terms seem to lead to a basic question: who are the sources? The answer implicitly given to this question determines the term chosen. For instance, Gillian Bennett (1996) remarks that some institutions and individuals, uneasy with the connotations "folklore" may still carry nowadays, have preferred not to use the term at all, substituting it with expressions such as "cultural traditions" or "vernacular culture" (216).[31] A change in perspective allows us therefore to contextualise a term, finding in a specific situation the answer for its choice. Indeed, the presence of all these terms is rather eloquent in itself, as it indicates that looking for the "best one" and abandoning the rest without first establishing a context is not a wise operation, as what may appear "inadequate" at first sight, in a specific situation may be the best solution.

This thesis has opted for two terms: "folklore" and "orality". "Folklore" is specifically used in chapters 2 and 3 (and also part of chapter 6), whereas "orality" is more widely used through the thesis. With the use of the above discussed term "folklore", one intends to refer to a perspective that highlights both the collective origin of orality and its distance from the present times, two perspectives that characterised 19th-century approaches to orality. "Folklore", the lore of the folk, represents in this case a contextualised choice, because it introduces two important

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contrary, it has been often criticised, as shown by this list of alternatives that have emerged meanwhile.

[31] Bennett (1996) quotes for instance the Sheffield-based "Survey of Language and Folklore", which became the "Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language" (216).

elements that will be discussed in the first movement: "lore" and "folk". The meaning of "learning", "knowledge", "doctrine" inherent in the term points to the idea that folk material is not something introduced anew by a creative mind, but rather something learnt from past generations and repeated as such. The folk does not create precisely because it is "the folk", a collective entity resembling a container into which oral elements are poured and out of which they are pulled to be preserved on paper as cultural testimonies of the nation they are found in. In this thesis, "folklore" is therefore intentionally used to refer to 19th-century perspectives and to discussions taking place in that period, as the connotation of "relic" that the term seems to retain makes it perfect for a discussion on material that was meant to be rescued from oblivion and preserved for future generations.

As for the choice of using "orality", somehow a sort of umbrella term, it has been noted that each term invariably contains a particular ideological perspective. This thesis is no exception. Two terms appeared particularly interesting. The first one, oral narrative,[32] has the advantage of being applicable to many verbal forms, while emphasising the oral facet of the process and product in question (Finnegan 1992, p.13-14). One could point out that, considering its etymology, "narrative" shares the same root as "narration" and can be interpreted according to its meaning of "relating, recounting", thus stressing an oral operation. Taken in this sense, the adjective "oral" would appear redundant. The term "narrative", however, is debatable, too. Ruth Finnegan (1992) argues that if "narrative" is considered in its sense of "novel, tale, fiction or legend", it excludes non-narrative forms as proverbs and often poetry as well (13). However, John Niles (1999) interprets "oral narrative" as an everyday and omnipresent phenomenon ("... as much around us as the air we breathe...") and

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[32] The performable nature of "oral narrative" is stressed by Scheub 1971. Etter-Lewis 1993 uses both "oral narrative" and "oral narration"; Dégh 1995 and Muhawi 1999 combine "oral narrative" with "storytelling"; Cruikshank 1998 resorts to "narrative".

proceeds to define it as "... people's use of the elements of speech to evoke action in a temporal sequence" (1-2). Expanding the concept of "oral narrative" to include personal anecdotes (ibid., p.2), Niles actually overcomes Finnegan's argument and presents a perspective that sees "narrative" in its etymological sense. This thesis agrees with this view and acknowledges the interesting possibilities that "oral narrative" presents. Nevertheless, for the choice of the term to be used another factor arose: the belief that the fluid and all-inclusive[33] nature of orality does not lend itself so easily to rigid categorisations. The choice of eventually using orality in this thesis responds to this factor. As mentioned in the introduction, chapters have been divided and grouped under headlines that recall a musical composition, partly in the belief that oral phenomena have some common ground with music. One of the aspects they share is precisely the idea of fluidity, of a "flow" of sounds that makes the performance of an oral event similar to that of a piece of music. Like music, an oral event fills every corner of the environment it is performed in. In a broader sense, orality is present in many aspects of human life; John Niles (1999) highlights how storytelling is anywhere around, in short accounts of everyday events as well as in long and more articulate stories (64). In addition, orality is a term that, for its versatility and workability within the issues of translation here addressed, has proved useful despite its drawbacks. For instance, Ruth Finnegan (1992) highlights the probably too marked contrast with "literacy" (6). Indeed, orality is often opposed to "literacy", possibly because of the success obtained by Walter Ong's book *Orality and Literacy* (1982). This antithesis helps underline the two different facets discussed in this thesis: collectivity and individuality. Thus, the term "orality" is somehow "double-crossed", first by admitting an orality/literacy antithesis and then by rejecting it in favour of an all-encompassing meaning. In other words, this thesis

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[33] Because made of verbal and nonverbal elements, as well as being dependent on the interaction of participants and the influence of environment.

takes advantage of the orality/literacy antithesis in the first movement in order to highlight the distance between folklore material and translators, stressing the fact that such distance (resulting in a specific type of translation) is due to the attitude with which translators looked at oral sources. On the other hand, such opposition is not conceived of in the second movement, because "orality" and "literacy" are not seen as two antithetical terms. On the contrary, adopting John Niles's already mentioned approach, orality is intended as a phenomenon which is present in any society, regardless of its level of literacy, and one that emerges in and interacts with written discourse. Hence, the second movement stresses the presence and importance of verbal and nonverbal features in oral events of communities not necessarily "untouched" by the written word, going beyond any orality/literacy juxtaposition.

1.1.2. What "orality"?

This thesis acknowledges several types of orality, following the conviction that orality includes formal narratives, as well as informal accounts of events in everyday conversation (Swann 2000, p. 190). John Niles (1999) maintains that "we are all storytellers by the fact of our complex verbal existence" (64). The idea is that orality, intended as the action of narrating, is a heritage of any human being, regardless of the fact of coming from a so called oral culture or not. The definition that Jack Goody (1992) gives to oral culture is "a culture without writing" (12). Distinguishing between "nonliterate" and "illiterate", he explains that the former points to a community where tradition is handed down exclusively through the oral channel and stresses the importance of making a distinction between societies with writing and societies without, as orality in the two societies has a different weight (ibid., p. 12-13). While cultural transmission in societies without writing (nonliterate) is entirely entrusted to the oral tradition, this is not the case in literate societies (ibid.). Other

factors, such as composition, genres, and the idea of authorship behind the product, are different too (ibid., p.14). Walter Ong (1982) uses the expression "primary orality" to indicate an orality existing in a culture where no writing, print, or knowledge of the same is present, and distinguishes it from "secondary orality", i.e. a type of orality located in a modern, technological culture influenced by media like telephone, radio, television, etc. (11). However, he also remarks that "... primary oral culture in the strict sense hardly exists, since every culture knows of writing and has some experience of its effects" (ibid.). Indeed, defining "oral culture" is not straightforward. If one adheres to a first, brief definition as "a culture without writing" (Goody 1992, p. 12), an oral culture should be a culture where none of its members has had any contact whatsoever with writing. This means that even one member having some knowledge of writing would make that oral culture "not so oral" any more. In other words, saying that one comes from an oral culture is no longer such an unquestionable claim.[34]

More than twenty years after Ong remarked the difficulty of finding a purely oral culture, one is bound to find more and more convincing the fact that orality has been and is being influenced by other ways of expressing oneself,[35] giving origin to a phenomenon rich in infused elements, rather than to one enclosed in the isolation of a watertight compartment. (Ong 1982, p.11). Jack Goody (1987) argues that trying to establish a clear-cut division between oral and written cultures is a mistake, because

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[34] For instance, I come from an oral culture; not so long ago the peasants of the Venetian countryside, for lack of heating, electricity and entertaining devices, used to gather in the warmest place, the cowshed, to spend the evening together. Men would clean and sharpen their tools, women would spin, and storytelling ("*far filò*") would take place all through the night. Although these people had had contact with writing and print, the community that gathered "*a far filò*" was primarily an oral community, where the local (oral) vernacular (*vicentino*) was used and the national language hardly known, and where traditions. information, contracts, rituals and in short all that represented culture was performed orally. "Diversa la lingua..." says Dino Coltro (1998) about such vernacular culture, "diverso il modo di pensare, di vivere: si tratta di una diversa concezione del mondo" (107). At the same time, I do not come from an oral culture, because although speaking *vicentino* and having learnt it from people who were briefly exposed to that oral world, the society *I* have been exposed to was different, strongly dominated by print and the media.

[35] E.g. the influence that the Internet jargon nowadays has on conversation.

interaction between the oral and the written is more frequently the case (xii). The question, according to Goody, is not whether the oral and the written are two separate entities, but rather the degree of influence (when the two coexist in the same environment) that one specific communicative channel has on the other, as in such a situation "almost no 'oral' form can be unaffected by the presence of written communication..." (ibid., p.82). There is no binary opposition between literacy and orality,[36] Goody seems to conclude, because the oral is influenced by the written and the written involves oral processes for its composition, in a mutual exchange that makes both phenomena more complex than they appear (ibid., p.106). Similarly, Ruth Finnegan (1988) notes "a striking *overlap*" between the oral and the written (111), and such overlap impedes any assumption that a given narrative might come from a purely oral tradition (ibid., p.117).

On the basis of such considerations, it appears unproductive to keep making a distinction between "primary" and "secondary" orality, despite the fact that a difference in the reception and creation of oral material between two types of orality cannot be denied. Following Goody's point that there is an interface, and not a great divide, between the written and the oral, in this thesis the terminology "primary orality" and "secondary orality" is avoided. In fact, one may argue that the terminology here chosen is rather vague and general. Much like "translation", the use of the term "orality" may lead to wonder what sort of orality one is referring to. The intention is actually to be able to delete the word "sort" from the previous sentence. One believes that orality does not fall so easily into categories separated from one another like carriages in a train. Orality presents a fluidity that is inherent[37] in its

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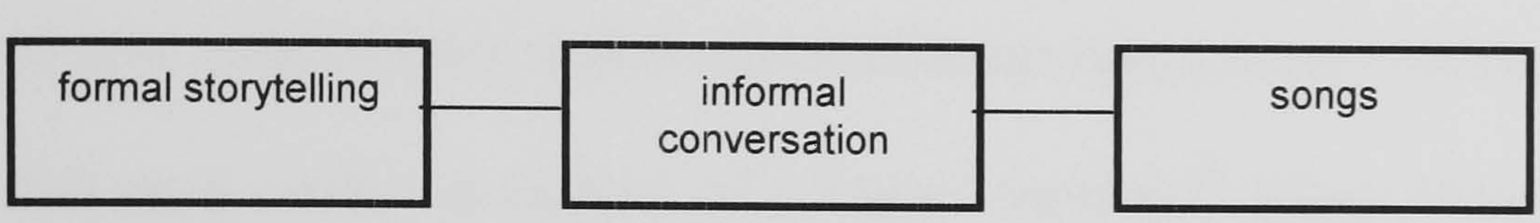
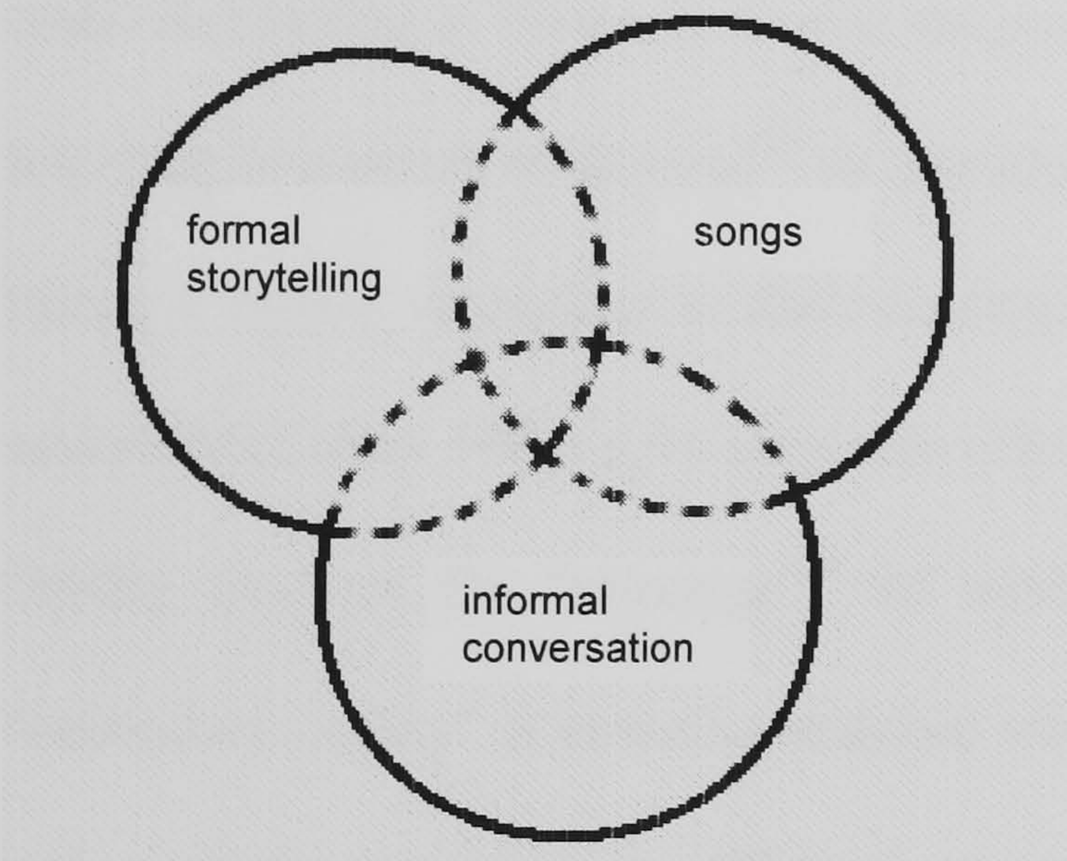
[36] Ruth Finnegan (1988) adds that "there is no reason why forms should *not* overlap..." (120; emphasis as in original).

[37] Similar to the movement among the molecules in the three states of matter, i.e. solid, liquid and gaseous. Spoken discourse may then be compared to a liquid state, where words are uttered, modified, taken back, repeated, whispered, shouted, stuttered, accompanied by eye and face movements.

nature; it appears therefore inconsistent with attempts to make a clear-cut distinction between different instances of orality, as well as between primary and secondary orality. Formal storytelling, informal conversation and songs may be taken as an example. The objective here is to go from this model:



To something like this:



Here the different areas overlap and the substance that constitutes them "melts" to allow influences from other areas to flow in and to create border territories where elements interact and are transformed.

It must also be said that most of the examples presented in this thesis do not derive from a "purely" oral culture, but from cultures that have had contacts with non-oral communicative channels. The orality that is investigated here is therefore a *mediated orality*. The term "mediated" underlines two aspects: the fact that it is a kind of

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gestures, body proximity, influenced by the presence of an audience whose feedback can delete, change or mould them in any form. As water freezes into ice and thus changes state, so words acquire a solid structure once they are written or recorded.

orality which takes shape *through* means other than the oral, and the fact that it has been influenced and modified by contact with other media.[38] It is a type of orality that shows aspects revealing an interplay of different media, as in the case of telephone conversations, radio talks, television shows and Internet terminology. As mentioned, it is by no means a new type of orality, but it is also true that the advent of new technologies makes this mediated nature more visible, giving the impression that such orality is indeed of a "new" variety.[39] Elena Pistoiesi (2004) talks about "*parlar spedito*", referring to the language of email, chat rooms and SMS, which, although written, has "invaded" the territory of the oral, taking possession of its code. According to Pistoiesi, in this language the written takes the voice as a model, resorting to a series of devices[40] to reproduce in the text the quality of speaking (98). Because media, regardless of their content, have an effect on human association and action (McLuhan 1964, p.9), they also affect how orality is perceived and performed. Orality receives the "massage"[41] of media, but remains orality. What Ong calls "secondary orality" is indeed a material which has been stirred with other ingredients and perhaps moulded in different ways, but whose basic components can be considered still the same.

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[38] For instance, Jack Goody (1987) remarks that "... when I compose orally (in my head) the sentences that I now write, I compose sentences for writing, ones that are adapted to the written channel" (xiii).
[39] "In the electronic age..." remarks Marshall McLuhan (1962), "we encounter new shapes and structures of human interdependence and of expression which are 'oral' in form even when the components of the situation may be non-verbal" (3).
[40] Among which Pistoiesi (2004) lists emoticons, capital letters and other graphic elements helping readers re-create a spoken dialogue in their minds (98).
[41] To use McLuhan's 1967 pun.

1.2. TRANSLATION

1.2.1. Applicability of the term "translation"

This thesis sees the act of transferring orality onto a paper, magnetic, electronic or digital medium as an act of translation.[42] Calling this transfer "translation" is not so obvious. On the contrary, it is still a controversial matter, to the point where what one may call "translation", others prefer to call "transcription", "transmutation", or even "adaptation", sometimes including these terms into the broader umbrella of "translation", sometimes drawing a clear-cut line between the two.[43] Possibly, one of the reasons for these doubts around the term "translation" or for its total rejection is the idea that taking a piece of orality and transferring it on paper, audiotape, videotape, CD, DVD or the Internet means "recording" it. The thought immediately goes to the act of "fixing" something in a reproducible form, which in turn gives the impression that the source material can be exactly duplicated. With orality this cannot be the case. As will be discussed in chapter 5, section 5.2.3., any recording device implies a choice. For instance, when opting for audiotapes one also chooses not to record any image, including the narrator's gestural expressiveness and appearance. On the other hand, when preferring a videotape (or digital imaging) one still has to choose what portion of environment will be left out, as a bird's eye view is not always achievable in these cases.

Considering the possibility of making such choices, the idea of recording does not appear as mechanical as one may believe. Nor does the idea of transcription, one of the terms mostly used to describe the passage from oral to written form, and one

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[42] What needs to be underlined here is that one is *not* claiming that such transfer be necessarily called "translation", but that there are sufficient reasons for calling it so.

[43] Other terms used in this context are "transliteration" (Zolbrod 1995) and "transformation". this latter used by Dell Hymes (1992) to indicate a "... transformation of modality, the presentation of something heard into something seen" (86).

which appears for instance in the works of American scholars[44] studying Native American literatures, as well as in those by scholars working in other fields or geographical areas, like African oral narratives.[45] In particular, scholars following a performance-oriented approach to orality seem not to acknowledge completely the question of translating intralinguistically from one form to another, preferring to proceed immediately with a discussion on interlingual translation. A few examples:

- In his book *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation* (1983), Dennis Tedlock devotes chapter 1 to discussing the translation of style in oral narrative and, although stressing the importance of reproducing paralinguistic features like voice quality, pauses or loudness, he focuses on a final product where Zuni narratives are translated into American English. Translation seems thus to be, in Tedlock's work, an interlingual matter, because the intralingual passage of oral into written is referred to as "transcription".
- In Laura J. Murray and Keren Rice's collection of papers on oral narratives,[46] devoted to the investigation of the problem of reproducing and editing oral narratives in print, the word "transcription" often appears followed by the word "translation" (e.g. pp. xvi, 3, 4, 10, 12).
- Dell Hymes (1977) uses the term "translation" to refer to the process of transferring Chinookan (oral) texts into American English, giving it an interlingual connotation.
- Anthony Mattina (1987), who suggests translating Native American (Colville) narratives into what he calls "Red English", i.e. the English his Colville narrator uses and which can be seen, in Mattina's opinion, as a pan-Indian phenomenon

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[44] E.g. Dell Hymes, Dennis Tedlock, Jerome Rothenberg, Paul Zolbrod.
[45] Scheub 1971, Goody 1977, p. 93.
[46] *Talking on the Page: Editing Aboriginal Oral Texts* (1999).

(139), does not appear to deal with intralingual translation nor, for that matter, with transcription at all.

The point is not that these scholars ignore the problems posed by the passage from oral to written form. Quite the contrary; for instance the issue of how to reproduce nonverbal features (acoustic and visual) and the fact that the written medium somehow tends to "freeze" the word are two issues widely discussed.[47] However, in these approaches there seems not to be a clear division between two stages of translation. Discussion is not on what happens when translating from oral A to written A, but rather from oral A to written B, omitting an important passage which therefore gives the reader the impression of being unproblematic. In brief, one has the impression of reading the following:

Evidence of this is, as already said, in the widespread use of the term "transcription" to indicate the act of writing down, the notation of something oral. Jerome Rothenberg (1983), who as mentioned earlier can be credited with the introduction of the expression "total translation" to indicate a translation that takes into account every feature of orality,[48] prefers to use "transcription" when quoting the opening line of a Navajo song written down in the source language (henceforth, SL) (382). According to the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (1969), "to transcribe" comes from Latin *transcribere*, with the meaning of "making a written copy of". As with the idea of recording, mentioned above, making a written copy of something gives the impression that the material is being copied down verbatim, word for word.

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[47] This aspect is also discussed in chapter 5, section 5.1.
[48] "Not only of the words but of all sounds connected with the poem..." (Rothenberg 1983, p. 382).

A sort of paradox is visible here. As mentioned, the performance-oriented approach is widely known for its concern in trying to reproduce not only words, but also nonverbal elements, starting from the idea that orality is made of more elements than just the words uttered.[49] Applying the term "transcription" to the transfer of oral A to written A somehow indicates that such a transfer is performed "smoothly". without the problems that, on the contrary, an interlingual translation would pose.

Other scholars openly acknowledge that the transfer of material from oral to written form is indeed a translation. When working with oral performances, Elizabeth Fine (1984) feels it is not possible to escape translation because, even when one avoids making a written record, one is still bound to translate the performance in one's mind in order to interpret it, and "the only difference is that we will do so without a textual record to substantiate our claims about the performance" (93). Indeed, it has been suggested that transcription *is* a form of interpretation, because it involves making a number of decisions about what can or cannot be retained, what has to be reproduced and what can be left out "in this sense transcription can be said to be a form of translation between the spoken and the written word" (Andrews 1995, p.49). Similarly, Willa K. Baum (1977) makes extensive use of terms like "transcribe" and "transcript" when discussing how to transcribe and edit oral history recorded on tapes, but she gives these terms a meaning that goes beyond the idea of "verbatim written copy", one that is more similar to a translation, as she refers to a connotation of artistry that the terms do not appear to have in general: "transcribing is a work of art, a little akin to translating from one language to another..." (26).[50] Transcription.

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[49] Elements that represent an essential part of orality. Norman Fairclough (1989/2001) notes how these features, which he calls "visuals", give a crucial contribution to the understanding of spoken texts (22).

[50] Working on Bulgarian oral history texts, Barbara Reeves-Ellington (1999) is aware that transcribing is already an act of translation, because "however carefully a transcriber may work, interpretation is inevitable between the narrative as spoken and the text as written" (107). Never abandoning the term "transcribe" and "transcription" (see e.g. pp. 104, 107,108, 112, 116, 117), Reeves-Ellington's approach shows however an awareness of the decision-making process implicit in transcription.

notes Ruth Finnegan (2000), "... is far from a transparent or automatic representation of 'its' original", because "the transfer from an oral to a written form is already one kind of translation" (114). Considering these observations, the scheme

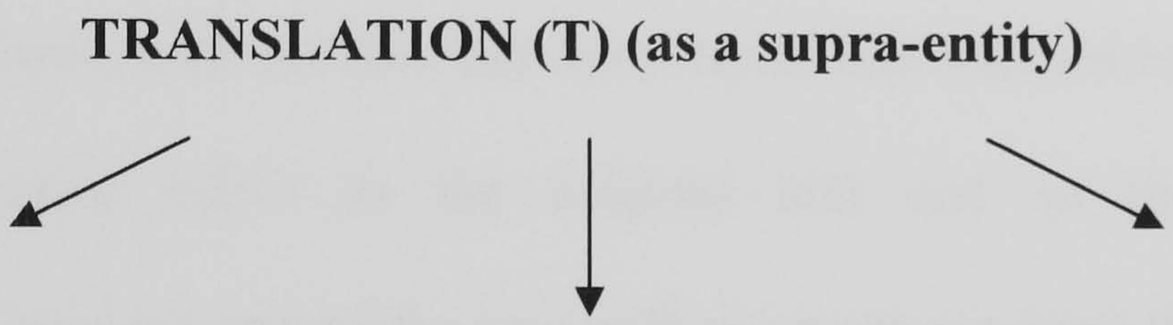
ORAL A ⇨ ~~WRITTEN A~~ ⇨ WRITTEN B

does not contribute to disentangle the problems that written A may pose, and needs to be replaced by the following: **ORAL A ⇨ WRITTEN A**, where ⇨ indicates an actual translating process.

1.2.2. The problems of "interlingual translation"

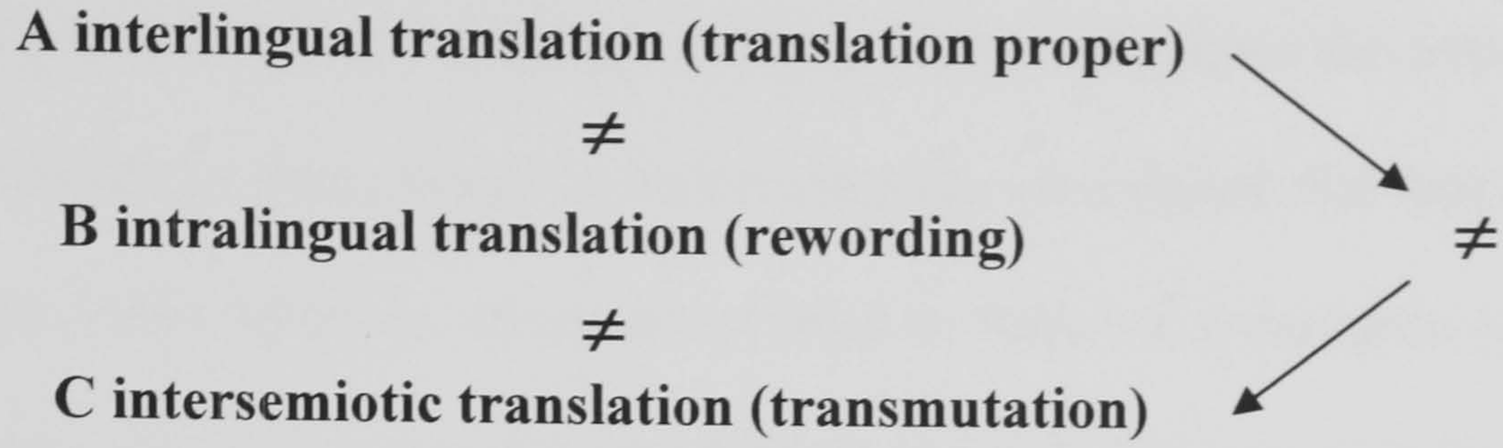
The terms "intralingual" and "interlingual" have been so far used. In his seminal essay "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" (1959/2000), Roman Jakobson identifies three ways of interpreting a verbal sign: intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic. Jakobson uses the word "translation" for all three situations and explains that "the meaning of any linguistic sign" is indeed "... its translation into some further, alternative sign..." (ibid., p.114). Intralingual translation is defined as "... an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language", interlingual translation as "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language", and intersemiotic translation as "... an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems" (ibid.). The question is how useful this distinction can be to find a definition for the passage from oral to written form. At face value, it could indeed be useful. One could, for instance, take the concepts of intralingual translation and intersemiotic translation, extrapolate from the former the idea of translating into the same language and from the latter the presence of

different sign systems (orality containing both verbal and nonverbal signs), and come up with a hybrid product where translation results from transferring verbal and nonverbal signs into generally verbal signs pertaining to the same language. Thus, hypothetically, expressions like "intralingual translation" or "intersemiotic translation" might represent a solution for the problem of naming the activity of converting oral material into written material. The word "hypothetically" is used because Jakobson's subdivision is momentarily viewed according to the following scheme:



(*to be intended as three different, equally-levelled instances of the same phenomenon*)

Nevertheless, Jakobson (1959/2000) goes further and explains that interlingual translation is "translation proper", intralingual translation is "rewording", and intersemiotic translation "transmutation" (114). Actually, the term "transmutation" looks interesting when applied to orality, because it implies some kind of alchemical process through which matter is physically moulded and reshaped, thus highlighting the fluid, ephemeral nature of orality. However, considering Jakobson's formulation of the three types of interpretation, the scheme depicted above would not hold true and should be changed as follows:



Here B and C, though sharing with A the word "translation", are nonetheless different from A (as well as from each other) in that they are not "translation proper". And indeed what in Jakobson is indirectly suggesting becomes outspoken in Umberto Eco's view of translation. Eco (2003) prefers to restrict his idea of translation to what Jakobson calls "interlingual translation". The reason seems to lie in Eco's uneasiness with the fact that intralingual and intersemiotic translation cannot produce the same effect as the original text and so they cannot originate equivalence,[51] because one of the two will say more (or less) than the other (321).[52] On the contrary, Eco's view is that a translation should not say more (or less) than the original (ibid., p.328). By manipulating the text through addition or deletion of material, one is therefore interpreting it, but not translating (ibid., p.325).[53] George Steiner (1975/1998), who adopts Jakobson's terminology to discuss intralingual and intersemiotic cultural phenomena, never abandons terms like "rewording" or "transmutation" (also introducing the concept of "partial transformations", p.437), but discusses them in the light of their translational nature and suggests that their interpretation requires processes similar to those of "translation proper" (ibid.,

[51] Defined as "the relationship between a source text (ST) and a target text (TT) that allows the TT to be considered as a translation of the ST in the first place" (Kenny 1998, p.77).

[52] Eco's view of translation appears to be strongly influenced by equivalence issues. In addition, there seems to be an overlapping of two different concepts: non-translation and "bad translation" (however this is perceived), as Eco's discussion and examples of what is not a translation often revolve around a lack of equivalence, which however does not means "non-translation" but simply "bad translation"; see e.g. Chesterman 1993, p.3.

[53] Similarly, Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) asserts *tout court* the impossibility of translation. Croce (1901/1990) makes a comparison with the action of decanting a liquid from a container to another of different shape, of which the liquid takes the shape. Similarly, a translation can perform a rewording, but it cannot reproduce aesthetically the shape of the original (87). "Ogni traduzione, infatti" notes Croce, "o sminuisce e guasta, ovvero crea una nuova espressione, rimettendo la prima nel crogiuolo e mescolandola con le impressioni personali di colui che si chiama traduttore" (ibid.).

p.436). Broadening the discourse to embrace culture, Steiner postulates the presence of topologies, intended as permanence in transformation, and points out that such invariable elements build relations which are similar to those of translation (ibid.. p.448). In this sense, one may argue that intralingual and intersemiotic transfers are indeed a form of translation proper, because they entail "... intuitive and technical motions which obtain in translation proper" (ibid., p.438).

Jakobson's division however does not appear useful for the purpose of defining the transfer from oral to written form, because its categories all present well-defined borders[54] that cannot fully account for phenomena that go beyond such classification, gathering elements from each group but not pertaining distinctively to any. Transferring oral material to the page in the same language can be viewed as an intralinguistic operation, yet if one goes so far as defining the oral and the written as two different languages, then the transfer becomes interlinguistic. In addition, it presents intersemiotic elements when one considers the fact that orality comprises sign systems different from the verbal one, which have to be translated into yet another sign system (kinesics into graphics, for instance). This idea can perhaps be better explained through a chromatic parallel. Let us imagine that the notion of translating orality is the colour salmon pink. Jakobson's categories would be 1) white, 2) red, and 3) yellow. Salmon pink cannot be obtained by using only white, red or yellow. Nor can it be obtained by mixing white and red, white and yellow, or red and yellow. It requires the three of them. By mixing and carefully measuring out the three colours, it is possible to obtain the exact shade of salmon pink one requires. At this point one wonders whether it might be more useful to drop restrictive definitions and broaden the idea of translation to encompass these borderline

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[54] Edwin Gentzler (2001) remarks how Jakobson's division presents different types of translation as isolated phenomena, and that this is hardly possible when one considers that translation is made up of various different aspects (1).

phenomena. In the light of all these considerations, here the use of the term "translation" is extended to the intralingual transfer of oral material to a different medium, and to advocate an idea of translation that goes beyond the boundaries set by the existence of different languages (interlingual), to include transfers involving sources and targets of a different nature.

1.2.3. What "translation" involves

Various definitions of translation have been attempted, both within and without TS. Interestingly, several key definitions, although formulated for a translation taking place between two languages, can be applied to the movement of oral material into a written, magnetic, electronic or digital form, thus suggesting that such a movement has several features in common with the so called translation proper.[55]

Translation is a utopian task. In José Ortega y Gasset's view (1937/2000), translation cannot duplicate the original text, because it is not the work in question; it is a work apart, "... with its own norms and own ends" (61). The idea of a perfect linguistic equivalence thus starts losing ground, in favour of a perspective that sees in translation an element endowed with a life of its own, a life that unravels according to specific rules that are not those of the original text. Similarly, scholars working with performance-oriented approaches to orality acknowledge and widely discuss the fact that it is virtually impossible to reproduce on the page every feature, verbal and nonverbal, characterising an oral performance. However, this also means that the resulting product may develop, like the above mentioned translation, its own specific characteristics, which make it a work apart.

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[55] This operation is possible bearing in mind what Chesterman and Arrojo (2000) have pointed out, i.e. that an all-inclusive and objective definition of translation does not exist, as any definition will necessarily be theory-bound and therefore likely to highlight some aspects to the detriment of others (152).

Translation is a decision-making process. According to Jiří Levý (1967/2000) translation is a "decision process"; like a game, it involves a series of moves that translators take when they choose among several alternatives (148). Similarly, Hatim and Mason (1990) note that translation involves "... the negotiation of meaning between producers and receivers of texts" (3). This aspect empowers translators and at the same time makes them aware of their responsibilities, as they play an active role in their production. As far as orality is concerned, translators have to make decisions about what to represent and what to leave out. 19th-century folklore represents a case in point. As will be discussed in chapter 3, the purpose of folklore collectors seems to have been mainly to record on paper elements of a tradition that was perceived as vanishing. Importance was given to texts, rather than to individual narrators. As such, nonverbal features, though acknowledged, were not deemed essential for preservation and were omitted, following a decision that privileged contents over form. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, even when one tries to represent nonverbal features, one is actually making a decision on what elements will be visually in the foreground and what will not, a problem that is not present in an oral performance, where all elements are equally visible and audible at the same time.

Translation is recodification. William Frawley's (1984/2000) use of the term stresses the fact that translation involves a series of codes being "decoded" and "rendered into other codes", where "code" may refer to language and also to other categories, because translation is not merely a transfer of languages, but also of other codes (i.e. visual codes into auditory codes) being used by humans in their interactions (251). This is a definition that can respond quite well to the oral medium. Translating orality onto the page implies decoding a complex and multifaceted event in order to re-code it according to different constraints. George Steiner (1998) notes

that both verbal and nonverbal[56] sign systems are codes, in that they both present a grammar, a syntax and different styles, acknowledging that the latter can be seen both as a language in technical terms (a "sequential rule-governed sign system") and in the broader terms of a communicative event (445). However, in the idea that verbal and nonverbal systems are codes that may be differently decoded and reconstructed there is a danger of seeing the translation of orality as a peculiar type of translation different from what has been defined as "translation proper". For example, Elizabeth Fine (1984) explains that since speech and writing are based on two different systems, transferring one into the other implies switching codes (96). Nevertheless, she also shows her intention of calling that movement "intersemiotic translation", to avoid confusion with translation from one language into another (ibid.). Again, the problem of these labels is that the translation of orality is viewed as something that looks like translation proper, but is not. Resorting to Frawley's definition may help, especially if one expands it to include all types of recoding (i.e. not only from language A to language B, but also from A to A_1), recognising in different transfers a process of translation.

Translation is a target-culture phenomenon and a cross-cultural event. "To translate", notes Hans Vermeer (1987), "means to produce a text in a target setting for a target purpose and target addressees in target circumstances" (29). Andrew Chesterman (1997) agrees that "a translation is any text that is accepted in the target culture as being a translation" (59). But talking about a target culture entails the existence of a source culture. Therefore translation is also a cross-cultural event. As Mary Snell-Hornby (1995) points out, translation does not take place merely between languages in a vacuum (39); one may say it takes place between cultures, intended as the amniotic fluid in which human beings float. As far as orality is concerned. the

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[56] Steiner (1998) is specifically referring to music (445).

question is whether one can speak of different cultures when the language is the same. In a hypothetical primary oral culture a written verbalisation would be considered as a phenomenon belonging to a different culture (e.g. that of a researcher doing fieldwork) and therefore, for the purpose of translation, a target phenomenon. In a context where oral performances are produced in a literate environment, seeing the oral and the written as stemming from different cultures (within the same language) may be less immediate. However, the fact that in this environment the two phenomena are both present is not evidence that two different cultures have merged into a single one, but simply that the two intertwine and interact with one another.

Translation is a social activity. Hatim and Mason (1990) define translating as "... a communicative process which takes place within a social context" (3). Gideon Toury's (1995) idea of translation as a "norm-governed activity" (56) points to the fact that translation takes places in a social community rather than in the abstract. This definition of translation owes much to the social aspect of language. The selection and production of oral material to translate are part of a process that takes place in a given society, where they are determined by clients, scope, destination, audience and means available. Being socially regulated, translated orality takes different shapes. For instance, it may result in ethnography when orality is collected and translated in order to produce a piece of academic research, or it may take the shape of a collection of fairy tales.[57] In both circumstances, translating orality is a process that obeys norms established by a given community (be that the academic world or a specific readership in the above mentioned examples).

Translation is a creative/ideological process. These two qualities are here grouped together because they somehow go hand in hand. Creativity *may* be induced by

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[57] For instance, the Grimms' collection of tales. For a detailed discussion of the Grimms' work, including the transformations that the tales underwent because of social constraints, see chapter 3, section 3.1.2.

ideology and ideology *cannot* exist without creativity also being present. Maurice Blanchot (1990) describes translation as a "play of difference", pointing at a sort of "hide-and-seek" game where translation reveals difference and hides it, always however alluding to it (83). This creativity, which is at the same time ideology as it implies choices dictated by motivations beyond linguistic levels, can also be inferred from the fact that, far from being a mere reproduction of a fixed text, translation "... functions as a commentary on the other and itself and on the differences between them" (Rothenberg 1992, p.65). The creativity and ideology of orality in translation are visible in the different approaches translators have chosen to follow when faced with the problem of representing this phenomenon on paper. One may for instance decide that it is important to highlight nonverbal features and thus elaborate ways of representing them onto the page, or one may think that the essential quality of orality is its poetics and therefore work out a structure felt apt to represent such poetics. And the very fact of trying to represent more than the context of a performance points to an ideology: the belief that orality is, in some communities, the way literature is expressed and therefore its value should not be diminished by preconceived ideas associating it to "folklore" in a negative sense.

From this brief list one definition of translation is missing: the one that sees translation as a transfer of material from one language to another. When John Catford (1965) put forward his definition of translation as replacement of textual material (grammar and lexis) in one language by equivalent textual material in another language (20), the whole question revolved around a linguistic perspective. Through the years this definition has been enriched with cultural and ideological dimensions,[58] yet the presence in the definition of two different languages somehow

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[58] Lawrence Venuti (1995) defines translation as "... a process by which the chain of signifiers that constitutes the source-language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the target-language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation" (17)

restricts the field of vision and leaves out phenomena like the above mentioned intralingual and intersemiotic translations. For the purpose of this thesis, using such a definition would mean accepting the idea that transferring orality onto the page in the same language is not translation. This could also make sense, after all theories do get refuted and change. However, such a variety of definitions as the above shows that translation has come to be viewed as something "more" than a mere transfer between two natural languages, encompassing areas that would have otherwise been excluded. It is precisely in these areas that, as discussed, the parallel with orality can function. Transferring orality into a different medium, be it paper. magnetic, electronic or digital, results in an act of translation by virtue of definitions like those mentioned above. This does not mean that all possible definitions of translation can be applied. Nevertheless, the presence of a number of definitions into which the movement of oral material into a different medium can fit suggests that this may indeed be seen as an operation of translation.

Anthony Pym (1992) has tried to go beyond a radical distinction between interlingual and intralingual, arguing that such division does not take into account that languages have fuzzy borders and that translating idiolects or sociolects poses fundamentally the same problems of translating between more distant languages (25). Andrew Chesterman (1997) argues that translation status can be granted to a translation that does not necessarily follow "absolute equivalence" and proceeds to supply translation examples of very little orthodox nature (60-61). According to Chesterman (1993), a translation can be called such when a) the translator considers it a translation, and b) a number of people accept it as a translation (2). Chesterman therefore rejects the idea of "perfect equivalence" as a prerequisite for translation, and prefers to see in the existence of a relation between the target text (henceforth, TT) and the source text (henceforth, ST) a condition for TT to be called a translation

(ibid.). Translating orality requires making choices and taking decisions similar to those expected when translating from one language to another. In this light, the use of the term "transcription" discussed at the beginning of this chapter and intended as a verbatim written copy of oral material appears little suitable to represent such transfer in all its components.

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Discussing orality in translation is like entering two vast territories presenting many different aspects. One wonders what sort of orality one is referring to, as well as what is the intended meaning behind "translation". Thus, a first important problem immediately comes up: defining the semantic field of "orality" and "translation" in a specific context. This prelude introduced some basic concepts for the comprehension of this thesis, explaining what is intended by "orality" and "translation" and in what context they are used here. Clearly, these terms cannot be evaluated in a vacuum. Similarly, they do not represent an ideal choice in any situation, but need to be understood within certain contexts. For the purpose of this thesis, in both cases a specific meaning has been extrapolated from the range of meanings that the two terms display, somehow "stretching" and "moulding" their semantic shape to obtain two items that could be used for this line of argument. This moulding operation represents a sort of recurrent theme. As will be discussed in the next two movements, both orality and translation can take different shapes, as their pragmatic boundaries seem to modify in consequence of different perceptions of the sources, becoming folklore and folklore collections when referred to collective sources, or orality and oral performances if referred to individuals.

1st Movement:
Folklore and Collectivity

2

19TH-CENTURY PERSPECTIVES ON THE NOTION OF "POPULAR" IN ENGLAND AND ITALY

> ... I fear we must come to the conclusion that the said Folk is a fraud, a delusion, a myth.
>
> Joseph Jacobs, "The Folk" (1893, p. 234)

This chapter examines oral sources as "distorted" by the lens of folklore, taking into account the transformations that the notion of "popular" underwent in 19th-century folklore collections. In the 19th century, both England and Italy seem to have developed a study of folklore that was based on an idealised entity. The folklore that was collected on the printed page was taken from sources that in the passage from oral to written form were transformed, somehow digested and re-presented in a different light. Both England and Italy were undergoing crucial changes in their respective social fabrics, and both felt the need to create a sort of "comfort zone", a reassuring presence that could function as a role model against disturbing elements produced by such changes. In this light, the creation of an English "folk" and an Italian "*popolo*" provided a vision of tranquillity and reassurance, acting as a shield that protected society against the intimidating and destabilising presence of their respective factual counterparts. Who or what were these two organisms is an issue that requires a double perspective, one looking into a specific layer of population and its transformation in society, the other examining the perspective that gave origin to such notions. A discussion of the alterations that affected the "folk" and the "*popolo*" in England and Italy is therefore useful in order to show how these, influenced by

spurs of nationalism emerging throughout Europe,[1] followed a similar evolution, reacting to a situation brought about by different causes. The English "folk" and the Italian "*popolo*", constructed in response to these causes, came to represent the "collectivity", i.e. a homogeneous organism (though derived from a heterogeneous group) where individual voices seemed silent, or rather they were ignored in favour of a perspective that needed to bring in the foreground the reassuring elements of unity and tradition.

2.1. ENGLAND

During the 19th century, changes in work conditions and production gave society an industrial character that affected the figure of workers, determining its qualitative transformation. A different work pace and production rate, new ways of spending spare time, economic problems and the spread of schooling contributed to improve the outline of a specific social figure: the working class.

2.1.1. Construction and evolution of a class

The industrial revolution brought about social changes that identified new structures and shifted the focus onto a definite figure: the labouring poor.[2] Asa Briggs (1983) sees the idea of social class as a specific product of 18th- and 19th-century economics,[3] pointing out that before the changes brought by industrialisation, one spoke of "ranks" and "orders" instead (3).[4] However, Eric Hobsbawn (1977) wonders whether it is possible in the 19th century to speak of a single category of

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[1] On this subject, see also chapter 6, section 6.1.
[2] For an overview of working-class life in the first half of the 19th century, see Rule 1986. Kirk 1998 gives an evaluation of labour history in the 2nd half of the 19th century, taking into account issues of gender and culture.

workers as a class and doubts that the members of such a heterogeneous group coming from a different environment and having a different formation, financial situation and sometimes different language, could have anything in common (262). Even poverty could not represent a distinctive measure, as its degree varied according to whether one was regularly employed or not, skilled or unskilled (ibid.). Nevertheless, this heterogeneous mass shared a factor: it was segregated from a better-off middle class (ibid.). According to Hobsbawn then, workers developed a common consciousness in consequence of such polarisation,[5] which in cities led to the establishment of a common lifestyle and thought (ibid.).[6]

During the Tory government of 1815-30, social distress grew worse, due to some unfortunate resolutions taken by the government[7] and to the poor harvest of 1829; dissatisfaction grew and working-class unions started to be formed (Wood 1982, p.77; also Gregg 1971, pp.166-169).[8] The creation and development of workers' unions, which gave an important contribution to the formation of a new conscience among labouring people, appears however to be negatively viewed in an age where industrialisation thrived (Hopkins 1979, p.39). Nevertheless, in the 1830s trade unions became more and more popular among workers and grew in importance,

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[3] The same word *class* seems to have acquired its modern, social sense around 1740 (Williams 1958, p.14). This does not mean that social division was not present in England before that date, but rather that a new attitude towards these divisions started to take place (ibid., p.15).

[4] For an account on the birth of classes, see also Perkin 1969.

[5] Asa Briggs (1959) acknowledges the birth, in the 1830s and '40s, of two forms of class consciousness, a working-class one and a middle-class one, the latter fostered by a fear of a potential working-class number hegemony (297). The opposition, confirm Sabbatucci and Vidotto (2002), was no longer between aristocracy and the people, but between the bourgeois and the labourer, between bourgeoisie and proletariat (76).

[6] Eric Hobsbawn also underlines that "the poor", who did not have any job and could not make use of trade unions, were excluded from this collective consciousness and represented yet another group on their own (1977, p.263).

[7] For example, the massacre of Peterloo (1819), where troops were given orders to fire on the crowd that had gathered for a meeting, or the decision to remit income tax, which weighed on the upper and middle class (Wood 1982, pp.64-65).

[8] Anthony Wood (1982) underlines the difficulty in deciding whether the standard of living for the working class was improving or deteriorating. The debate, he points out, is influenced by political overtones which in turn sees the difficult situation of the working class as a result of *laissez-faire* attitudes or as a series of readjustments taking place during the first stage of industrialisation (105).

changing from small associations of local people to vast-scale institutions (Wood 1982, p.128). In 1845 the National Association of United Trades for the Protection of Labour was formed (Gregg 1971, p.334). It is in this transformation that one can perhaps recognise an evolution in self-awareness of working-class people, who started to become more and more conscious of their class as a whole.[9] The strength of this awareness may be seen as a major cohesive element in the formation of the working class, and perhaps also the element that fostered a counter reaction that gave origin to the notion of "folk".

2.1.2. Working-class leisure and work

In the second half of the 19th century, the effects of legislation and union activism brought a reduction of working time, consequently allowing workers to enjoy more spare time (Bailey 1978, p.80). The working week was interrupted by a Saturday half-holiday and the working year by the introduction of annual holidays[10] (ibid., pp.80-81). However, the situation does not appear as such during the first half of the century, when England's recreational facilities were scarce, especially for working people (Walvin 1978, p.2).[11] In addition, James Walvin remarks that factory owners were unwilling to allow more time off working hours, as the pace of factory and

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[9] After 1880, Socialist theories began to attract a higher number of workers, also because of several slumps that had taken place during the second half of the century and had created great unemployment (Wood 1982, p.364). There was a growing demand among the working class for a representative political party (ibid., p.369). As a result, the Independent Labour Party was created in 1893 (ibid.). In 1906 the party became simply known as the Labour Party (Gregg 1971, p.402). For a history of the British Labour movement, see Hunt 1971. Ward 1962 carries an investigation into the controversies of 19th-century society through the factory movement, whereas Morton and Gate 1956 present a dated yet comprehensive survey of the Labour movement from the birth of a class to that of the Labour Party. On the construction of the working class, see E. P. Thompson 1968.

[10] Peter Bailey (1978) notes that the Bank Holiday Act (1871), although intended for bank workers. was soon applied to other groups, too (81).

[11] James Walvin (1978) sees in this scarcity one of the reason for turning to social drinking (2).

workshop work was time-consuming,[12] and there was a widespread belief that working-class leisure was unnecessary and counterproductive (ibid., pp.5-7).

Nonetheless, in the second half of the century communications, both in terms of press and mobility, started to improve, and leisure took the form of cheap reading[13] and daily excursions (Bailey 1978, p.81; see also Walvin 1978, pp.19 and 25). Lowerson and Myerscough (1977) even talk about a leisure revolution,[14] which involved not only more free time, but also a wider range of diversions (1). In towns, the creation of clubrooms and institutes, and the opening of libraries and museums increased the possibilities of working-class leisure (Bailey 1978. p.82; see also Best 1971, p.212). Literacy, which before 1850 had been hindered by the cost of reading material and the limited means of distribution, benefited by cheaper production methods, a wider distribution network, and other consequences of industrialisation,[15] making the number of literate working-class people rise (Stephens 1998, pp.144-145). Clubs, associations and societies also played their part in the diffusion of literacy, by making reading material available to working-class members (ibid., p.150). The creation of possibilities for cheap reading is an important factor to take into account in the discussion of orality, as it shows a source language (orality) being enriched by the contact with what W.B. Stephens calls "the culture of print", at the same time influencing the writing with its features (ibid., p.152).[16]

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[12] The perception of time itself changed, as factory rhythms marked time by the clock; the practice of measuring time this way made "wasted time" more visible and brought the necessity of finding ways to save it (Lowerson and Myerscough 1977, p.14).

[13] For example penny gaffs and penny readings (Best 1971, p.198).

[14] If contrasted with a pattern of pre-industrial recreations that followed the annual cycle of farming and was characterised by festivals and fairs linked to agricultural and religious events (Lowerson and Myerscough 1977, p.8). Geoffrey Best (1971) talks about minor changes and more stability in rural recreational patterns, but acknowledges that things were to change rapidly after the 1830s (198).

[15] W.B. Stephens (1998) mentions the use, from the 1880s, of paraffin lamps and the exposure of city workers to posters and leaflets (150).

[16] W.B. Stephens (1998) notes how not only oral culture did not disappear, but it also persisted in popular literature, the reading material of working-class people (152). Martha Vicinus (1974) remarks that oral culture started to appear more and more in print, and that street literature, especially in the form of broadsides, presented pre-literate oral elements like repetitions, proverbs, allusions, rhymes, as well as intentional spelling mistakes reproducing oral forms (26).

Popular leisure also took the form of pubs and recreational drinking, despite the fact that temperance movements sought to curtail pub opening hours (Bailey 1978, p.83).[17] The idea behind this "counter-reformation" was that recreation did not represent a suspension of working activities, but rather "an adjunct and complement to work", which was to be extended to off-work activities so as to maintain control over society (ibid., p.94).[18] In this light, a solution to intemperance was the creation of working men's clubs that offered a space for meeting and moral improvement (Taylor 1972, p.1). As John Taylor puts it, "the working men's club... was to be the salvation of a class, a haven of sobriety, where working men could be weaned from the temptations of the public house" (ibid., p.2).[19] Geoffrey Best seems to suggest that working men's clubs were successful institutions, as "plenty of working men and boys were ready to respond ascetically to what one of them called 'the sacred cause of self-advancement'" (1971, p.211). However, Taylor notes that many of these clubs had a short life despite working hard toward their goal of moral improvement, precisely because of the prohibition of selling beer; some even started

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[17] Indeed, popular recreations appear to have been a rather delicate issue, curbed and yet spreading thanks to workers' spending power (Bailey 1978, p.84). Peter Bailey notes for example how the consumption of alcohol had increased in the mid-1870s, explaining this as a rise in pub social drinking rather than as the consumption of alcohol as a part of daily diet (ibid., p.88). Interestingly, Bailey also sees a connection between traditional drinking and class identity: "Strong ale and its legendary compeer roast beef were not merely the stage properties of an erstwhile Merrie England, but sacraments in a continuing mythology of national superiority and class identity" (ibid., p.89).

[18] Geoffrey Best (1971) sees the debate over working-class recreation as a matter of "respectability" and draws a sharp line between respectable and non-respectable people, where "the respectable man was a good man, and also a pillar of society. He might be poor, he might be rich; it really made no matter which" (260). According to Brad Beaven (1991), Best's analysis is however based mostly on middle-class sources, and thus does not represent a factual picture of working-class recreational habits, but a mere reflection of middle-class philanthropism and preoccupation with social cohesion (8).

[19] In January 1873, an appeal supporting the working men's club acknowledged that the working class had become a crucial element in society and explained that "the future prosperity of this country, and the stability of its institutions, will largely depend on the morality and intelligence of its artizans, as well as on a good understanding and cordial co-operation between employers and their workpeople..." (Taylor 1972, p.3).

to introduce beer to keep the club alive and withstand the competition of pubs (1972, pp.14-15).[20]

Popular recreation seems therefore to have been frowned upon, particularly when order and control were in danger. Robert Storch (1976) for instance notes how popular leisure and crime were seen in parallel and describes how police had taken on the role of the "domestic missionary", carrying on a constant monitoring of working-class leisure places (487). The role taken by police and workers' perception of it reflected, in Storch's view, a deep social change in class relations and an interruption of communication between classes, because "both the 'language' and the objectives of urban masses were, if intelligible at all, deeply frightening" (ibid., p.495).[21]

2.1.3. The debate over mass schooling

Mass schooling gave origin to a complex debate which spanned the whole century, with positions that changed radically, and which are worthwhile discussing at this point because they provide some insight on the process of idealisation of the working class, as pure oral sources were felt to be disappearing with the "defeat" of illiteracy.[22]

The argument against education for the working class, rather strong at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of 19th century, claimed that education would disrupt social order and that unity could exist only by maintaining the traditional hierarchical structure of orders and privileges (Smelser 1991, p.50; see also Kaestle

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[20] Brad Beaven (1991) confirms this point by underlining the social failure of working men's clubs (9).

[21] That the masses needed some sort of "refinement" is evident in Thomas Wright's statement (1867) that "in the sense in which intelligence implies a certain degree of general knowledge and refinement of manners, the working-classes generally are *not* intelligent" (1967, p.5).

[22] According to Penny Fielding (1996), the schooling campaign had the effect of moving orality away from a temporal situation, and ascribed it a twofold nature, sentimentalising it as a relic of the past or identifying it as a subversive force of a specific social layer (27).

1976, p.179). According to Eric Hopkins (1979), working-class education was frowned upon by the middle class, who feared political unrest and thought that too much education would create discontentment among the labourers, finally fully aware of their condition (72). Education would make the poor restless, unhappy about their condition and wanting to advance in society, in search of a better situation (Smelser 1991, p.51). This in turn would foster seditious writing and revolutionary ideas (ibid.). "Mr. *Rose*" mentions the Parliamentary Debate of 13 July 1807 "... had no doubt that the poor ought to be taught to read; as to writing, he had some doubt, because those who had learnt to write well, were not willing to abide at the plough..." (col. 800).[23] In 1818 Thomas Peacock was insisting on the dangers of mass schooling. "How can we be cheerful" says Mr. Flosky in *Nightmare Abbey* "when we are surrounded by a *reading public* that is growing too wise for its betters?" (150; emphasis as in original). In addition, however, there seemed to be a preoccupation for the quality of reading, as well as a criticism of popular literature, revealing that literacy was not uncommon at the beginning of the 19th century: "that part of the *reading public* which shuns the solid food of reason for the light diet of fiction, requires a perpetual adhibition of *sauce piquante* to the palate of its depraved imagination. It lived upon ghosts, goblins, and skeletons..., till even the devil himself... became too base, common and popular, for its surfeited appetite" (ibid., p.117).

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[23] This attitude still reflected, albeit not so radically, Bernard de Mandeville's doubts about educating the labourers. "The greatest Grievance of Farmers, Gardiners and others, where hard Labour is required, and dirty Work to be done" said Mandeville in 1714, "is that they can't get Servants for the same Wages they used to have them at" (1970, p.306). The blame for this would be, according to Mandeville, on education: "... and what madness is to Encourage them in this, by industriously encreasing at our Cost that Knowledge which they will be sure to make us pay for over again!" (ibid., p.307). The answer to this problem for Mandeville lies in confining the knowledge of the poor within their occupation, because "the more a Shepherd, a Plowman or any other Peasant knows of the World, and the things that are Foreign to his Labour or Employment, the less fit he'll be to go through the Fatigues and Hardships of it with Chearfulness and Content" (ibid., p.294). In *A Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil* (1790), Soame Jenyns echoed these considerations and came to the same conclusions by defining ignorance as an "opiate" to the sufferings and miseries of the poor, "...

However, toward the 1830s and 40s, this view started to be challenged by an attitude that saw education as a means to promote social harmony and to prevent crime.[24] In this sense, education started to represent a form of control of seditious ideas (Smelser 1991, pp.51-52). "Would educated working men" asks Thomas Wright "be blindly led to their own destruction by frothy professional agitators... ?" (1967, p.7). Eventually, this attitude prevailed, as confirmed by further interpretations of education as a preventive measure apt to transform criminals into employed and productive citizens (Smelser 1991, p.52; see also Graff 1987, p.315; Bailey 1978, p.96).[25] Thomas Laqueur (1976a) suggests that education, in particular that of Sunday schools,[26] came to be seen as a way of "taming" the masses,[27] and argues that literacy became part of a bourgeois "psychological revolution" fought with the weapon of self-improvement and respectability, and aimed to teach the working class the acceptance of bourgeois values (242). "If the working-classes were, in the educational sense of the term, intelligent" argued Thomas Wright in 1867, "would eight men out of ten in a large workshop habitually use blackguard [sic] and blasphemous language in their ordinary conversation...?" (1967, p.6).

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a cordial administered by the gracious hand of providence; of which they [the poor] ought never to be deprived by an ill-judged and improper education" (1969, pp.49-50).

[24] In addition, by then many charity-funded working-class schools had been founded, making a position against mass schooling impracticable (Stephens 1998, p.12). On education during these decades, see also W. B. Stephens 1987, who shows how provision of education varied according to the geographical area.

[25] In proposing a motion to consider a plan for establishing a system of national education, Mr. Roebuck asked that education became one of the government's chief concerns and wished that "... a much more constant and affectionate communication between different classes of society" took place "... in consequence of an improved plan [for national education]" (Parliamentary Debates 1833. coll.149-150). To reinforce this, Roebuck continued by reversing the argument that saw education as a threat to social order and suggested that it was instead a way to mould honest and responsible citizens: "no independent and exalted feeling can arise amongst those whose existence is marked. every day of their lives, with the broad indelible stain of living by the bread of others" (ibid., col.150).

[26] Interpreted by Thomas Laqueur (1976a) as instruments for rescuing destitute children from the corruption that would linger in their homes, and transforming them into the future, morally regenerated, working people (4-5).

[27] Education, suggests Thomas Wright (1967), should be go along with moderation. i.e. should be enough to make men "intelligent", without transforming them into scholars (13).

In the 1850s and 60s education acquired the signification of social and intellectual improvement, and was accompanied by the emergence of a self-help creed, which saw in education a way to social mobility (Smelser 1991, p.54).[28] Nevertheless, a direct demand for education by the working class seems not to have been preponderant throughout the century (Smelser 1991, p.254). Rather, the question would have been debated among the exponents of the upper classes, who responded to other working-class demands with provision of education (ibid., p.255). Thomas Laqueur (1976b) however suggests that the role of working-class schooling demand has by and large been ignored or given a passive character (193-94). Focusing on elementary education, Laqueur affirms that historians have ascribed the middle class an active role in the educational debate, relegating working-class members to the role of "victim" (ibid., p.194). This approach, argues Laqueur, cannot explain why working-class parents took the trouble of sending their children to school, considering that school attendance only became compulsory after 1880 (ibid., p.195). Yet demand for elementary education appears to have been high (ibid., p.196).[29] Laqueur sees in this the evidence that working-class parents indeed chose to educate their children and that therefore they actively participated in the schooling reform (ibid., p.195).

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[28] The self-help creed was particularly emphasised in the writings of Samuel Smiles (1812-1904). A promoter of progress, work and self-reliance, Smiles published with success a number of books (among which *Self-Help*; *Duty*; *Character*; *Industrial Biography*) that exalted perseverance, prudence, hard work and frugality (Bradshaw and Ozment 2000, p.320).

[29] Besides quoting figures, Laqueur cites as evidence the high discrimination in demands for basic education, which saw a preference among working-class parents for private schools even when state-financed schools were increasingly available (1976b, p.176). This would be, in Laqueur's view, proof that the working class was selective (and thus active) in its demand for education (ibid., p.202). For a detailed account (with figures) of school attendance and regional variations, see Stephens 1998, esp. chapters 2 and 5.

2.1.4. England is an old country: an idealised past

The transformations that society underwent in terms of work, leisure and education point to a general ferment that renovated its set-up, possibly giving the impression that some sort of social revolution was subverting the old order. Against the discomfort that these changes might have provoked, safety was in the past. In many ways, industrial society proved to be a source of stress for the 19th-century English population, either because it exploited manpower and created miserable living conditions, or because it represented a rather sudden split from a past necessarily very different. Thus, the past came to be generally viewed as a synonym for a way of life that industrial society did not provide any longer, a way of life that was slow-moving and stable, ancient and spiritual (Wiener 1981, p.6; see also Bennett 1993, p.79). The "English way of life" was not rooted in inventions and production, but in preservation, harmony and morality (Wiener 1981, p.6; see also Boyes 1993, p.7).

In her introduction to Elizabeth Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters* (1866), Margaret Lane underlines the ideal, rural character of the novel's setting, a world before the advent of railways, before the industrial revolution, a "... stable and innocent world, from which we emerge consoled and refreshed in spirit" (1966, pp.7 and 11). The contrast between the rural, nearly bucolic and idyllic countryside in the South and the industrialised, almost "dark" North is well depicted in another of Gaskell's novels, *North and South* (1854-55). The dualism that juxtaposed "Merrie England" and "industrialisation" is painted in vivid colours in the air: "'You can't think the smoky air of a manufacturing town, all chimneys and dirt like Milton-Northern, would be better than this air, which is pure and sweet, if it is too soft and relaxing...'" (1970. p.80); in people's character: "in such towns in the south of England, Margaret had seen the shopmen, when not employed in their business, lounging a little at their doors. enjoying the fresh air, and the look up and down the

street. Here, if they had any leisure from customers, they made themselves business in the shop..." (ibid., p.95); in education: "'A private tutor!' said Margaret, looking scornful: 'What in the world do manufacturers want with the classics, or literature, or the accomplishments of a gentleman'" (ibid., p.72). The conclusion, however, shows an attempt to create a "marriage" between different regions and different classes: "'... And yet, yo' see, North and South has both met and made kind o' friends in this big smoky place'" (ibid., p.112). On the contrary, in *Sybil* (1845) Benjamin Disraeli preferred to underline the distance among social classes and voiced the contrast between "two nations", "the rich and the poor", which did not communicate nor know each other, "... as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different breeding"; so different that they "... are farmed by a different food,[30] are ordered by a different manners, and are not governed by the same laws" (1980, p.96).

Indeed, it appears that the myth of the past was particularly productive in literature. Mary Mitford's descriptions of rural England contain numerous elements that place her writings in such a context of rusticity, familiarity and idyllic peace: "Of all situations for a constant residence" wrote Mitford in 1824, "that which appears to me most delightful is a little village far in the country; a small neighbourhood, not of fine mansions finely peopled, but of cottages and cottage-like houses... with inhabitants whose faces are as familiar to us as the flowers in our garden; a little world of our own, close-packed and insulated like ants in an ant-hill..." (1902, p.3).

The "English dream" hence was embodied by a folk society where the underlying

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[30] In a colourful description, Disraeli presents the exoticism and implicit refinement of an aristocratic meal: "In the midst of all this, waiters glided about handing incomprehensible mixtures bearing aristocratic names; mystical combinations of French wines and German waters, flavoured with slices of Portugal fruits, and cooled with lumps of American ice..." (1980, pp.28-29). A rather different meal would expect workers of northern lands, "[a diet of] oatmeal, bacon, potatoes and buttermilk" (Ashton 1969, p.13).

driving force was tradition and ties, symbolically represented by the village (Wiener 1981, p.42).

As mentioned, this dream had as a leitmotif a pull toward the past, based on the notion that England was an old country and that it possessed a heritage which risked falling into oblivion if nothing was done to preserve and protect it (Wiener 1981, p.43). The pull toward the past seemed to go along with an interest in ruralism; the fact that England was an old country implied, after all, that a rural nature was still present and alive (ibid., p.46). Hence, traditions were above all rural traditions, which still survived and could be found "untouched" in the countryside (ibid., p.47).[31] The rural myth appeared to acquire more and more power as industrialisation set in and city growth reached in a few decades levels that had never been touched before (ibid.). Indeed, the urge to preserve England's precious heritage seems to have come from a wealthy élite[32] which was well established in cities and which had become so powerful that it did not feel threatened by the decline of agriculture and was therefore able to work for the preservation of a waning rural life (ibid., p.48). One of the ways to preserve this ruralism was to create and promote a different image of the country, from a young and innovative nation to an ancient and stable one (ibid., p.43).

In Gillian Bennett's view, the biggest impulse to create and spread a mythological image of Britain as a rural haven came from folklorists, who were working to preserve British traditions and were therefore aware that rural England did not

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[31] For instance, in the introduction to his collection of English customs, Peter Hampton Ditchfield states that the purpose of the book is to gather those old customs "...which still linger on in the obscure nooks and corners of our native land..." (1901, p.v).

[32] Martin Wiener (1981) interestingly points out that through the 19th century the rural myth slowly lost its original audience, the labourers, but found a new one in the middle class. In fact, while the former were trying to adjust to a new life in the cities, the latter reacted by turning more and more towards the old life and rural myths (49). Indeed, according to Anthony Wood (1982), mid-century prosperity helped the consolidation of a middle class that had become wealthy and large, ranging from shipowners and bankers to small manufacturers, clerks and rich shopkeepers, but this new

correspond to reality (1993, p.77). This myth reflected a rural England that did not exist any longer (if it ever did), because the changes that affected industrialised society had repercussions on the countryside itself.[33] Yet the myth held on through the 19th century and well into the 20th.[34] The same Folklore Society[35] worked towards the popularisation of this myth by defining its own publishing programme and encouraging the market of country books (Bennett 1993, p.84). As a result, folklorists accepted and followed the idea of a rural England, revealing their attitude in a language and imagery where ruralism and nostalgia abounded (ibid., p.82). The past, explains Martin Wiener (1981), with its harmony, stability and peacefulness represented a "demi-Eden" from which modern society had fallen and towards which one was trying to return (59). "Merrie England" was populated by "merry peasants" living in quiet farms surrounded by a dreamlike landscape; an old and rural country which "... was the home and nurse of all that was noblest in the human spirit" (Bennett 1993, p.78).[36] The country had thus become a sort of refuge from modern life and society, a place where one could regain one's lost balance (Wiener 1981, p.51).

The idyllic peace of a countryside that was being swept away by the industrial changes[37] in society was a recurrent theme that in 19th-century literature gave birth

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affluence did not seem to have an impact on labourers (182-85). For a social reading of the changes that took place in rural mid-19th-century England, see Howkins 1991; Mingay 1990.

[33] For an account of agricultural revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries, see Chambers and Mingay 1966.

[34] Georgina Boyes (1993) provides a discussion on the revival and perpetuation of the rural myth in the 19th and 20th centuries.

[35] Founded in London, 1878.

[36] It could be also worth noting that Bennett recognises in this myth a metaphor, where the country becomes The Country, full of honour and dignity (1993, p.80).

[37] Such changes would have weakened social patterns that held within clusters of tradition, hence starting the practice of inventing tradition by referring to the past (Hobsbawn 1983, p.4; see also Boyes 1993, p.24). Chris Brook (1998) confirms that the invention of the past which took place in the Victorian age was due to a radical break with the present, which was characterised by social unrest (5). Bruce Waller (1990) however disagrees with the view of a radical and swift change, affirming that the pace of industrialisation was not fast enough to bring about transformations in only one generation, but that if one considers a time span of at least three generations, then changes were remarkable and affected various spheres, from economy to social relations, to mentalities and the

to contrasting images of country peace and city turmoil.[38] It should not be surprising, then, that a desire to escape the city life and all it represented became an underlying theme of novels like George Gissing's *The Nether World* (1889), whose description of a world from which there is no escape implied a strong urge to run away from that reality in search of a different kind of life.[39] The "nether world" lacks Christianity, trade unionism (as a form of solidarity among peers), and romantic love (Gill 1992, pp.xv-xvii). This suggests that what the nether world lacks can be found in a different, almost exotic world, away from the city and its problems. As Stephen Gill notes, the "upper world" remains an abstraction, but its presence, entailed by all the nether world is not, never abandons the course of events (ibid., p.xiv). This is probably one of the reasons why the rural myth exerted such a contrast as a metaphor. The countryside stood for craftsmanship, community, and peace; the city for mass-production, individualism, and conflict (Bennett 1993, p.82).

2.1.5. The "discovery of the people"

The idea that in the 19th century traditional popular culture was disappearing encouraged the development of a new interest in the "people", the "folk" (Burke 1978, p.3). This interest was defined the "discovery of the people" (ibid., p.6), because it turned to a traditional[40] and national literature that, it was felt, was best

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environment (232). On the effect of revolution and changes in agriculture, see Overton 1996; Beckett 1990. For a discussion of transformations in the transport system, see Bagwell 1974; Savage 1959 (a dated but comprehensive and articulate survey).

[38] Thomas Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), for instance, shows the pastoral and picturesque aspects of rural "Wessex", revealing a bucolic, idyllic character reflecting peace and order.

[39] In his introduction to *The Nether World* (1992), Stephen Gill remarks that all characters appear to be continuously moving around, as if really intervening to change their life and move to a different world (xiii). However, the movement is only ostensible and remains confined to a web of streets and places from which there is no escape (ibid.).

[40] This interest in tradition reveals an all-encompassing attitude, absorbing various levels of culture, from literature to folklore, architecture and antiquarianism (Brook 1998, p.6). In 1836 for instance, A. Welby Pugin emphasised the beauties of monuments and buildings of the past by stating that "on comparing the Architectural Works of the last three Centuries with those of the Middle Ages, the wonderful superiority of the latter must strike every attentive observer..." (1973, p.1).

expressed by the "people", or, even more hermetically, "the folk". The "people" who represented the spirit of a nation[41] however appears to be rather different from the people who dwelled in the nation itself.[42]

Around the 1850s, Britain could count 20% of agriculture labourers, a scanty percentage, when compared with the 70% of Italy (Sabbatucci and Vidotto 2002, p.180). Yet "for the discoverers", writes Peter Burke (1978), "the people *par excellence* were the peasants", who had remained in closer contact with nature and traditions (22) and were surrounded by an aura of purity that could not be found anywhere else.[43] This attitude is well exemplified by Robert Anderson (1828), who stated that, in order to find the original simplicity of ballads, a visit to the countryside was necessary, as there one would meet people "... who speak their sentiments with honest bluntness and... express themselves in the unstudied

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[41] According to Gerard Newman (1997), the formation of a British sense of national identity was encouraged by France's cultural domination in Europe, and particularly by the fact that this domination was acquiring a more definite character as a myth to be opposed by a national one (124): "To be truly English" notes Newman "was to live up to a stereotype generated in anti-Frenchness" (ibid.). István Bibó (1997) hypothesises that the concept of nation is a product of French Revolution, not because it was born in that period, but because the Revolution allowed its diffusion among the masses (39). Newman gives a precise period of time for the formation of British national identity, identifying in the 1750s the beginning of the process and in 1830 its conclusion (1997, p.127). Linda Colley (1992) traces the origin of Great Britain as a nation back to 1707, the year of the Act of Union that merged England, Scotland and Wales (11). However, uniformity was far from characterising the nation. As Colley notes, Great Britain in the 18th century presented various differences, in language and folklore (1992, p.13). The sense of national identity would have been a creation by intellectuals and literati, spread among the population through education, as well as literary and artistic means (Newman 1997, pp.125-26). The national ideal, as opposed to the French cultural model, was that of "sincerity", which meant "innocence", i.e. absence of deception, "honesty", "originality", "frankness" and "moral independence" (ibid., pp.129-131). But far from responding to the nationalist myth supported by the intelligentsia, Great Britain presented the aspect of a "patchwork", where regional and local identities were stronger than the idea of nation and where loyalty was to the village, the town, the local community, instead (Colley 1992, p.17). This local character, which will be retained in folklore all through the 19th century, somehow reflects the cultural situation of Italy one century later. The parallel also shows how the steps towards the "invention" of the British nation (propaganda, but also economic growth, as well as transport and press development; Colley 1992, p.389) were the same steps that finally led Italy to build its own sense of nation. See section 2.2. for a detailed discussion on the creation of the Italian nation.

[42] A people where the labourer "... has lost his simplicity"; "[he] reads the newspapers and has his ideas upon politics and social questions that would have startled his less cultivated sire" (Ditchfield 1901, p.2). As Rohan McWilliam (1998) highlights, "people" is an ambiguous yet useful term, because of its multiple meanings (56). Furthermore, it holds a patriotic character and does not pose the threats that the term "masses" does (ibid.).

[43] Roger Abrahams (1993) talks of "marginality of the peasantry", a Romantic sentimentalization of the folk that went as far as to include other outsider groups, such as bards and Gypsy dancers or singers (4).

simplicity of nature, and, in every look and feature, discover the natural feelings of the heart" (1). The stereotypical view of the peasant endowed with pure sentiments seems to have contributed to the development of the idealisation of the "folk", creating what Roger Abrahams (1993) sees as an opposition between "folk culture" and official culture (6). This would have had the curious consequence of identifying country people as local "*indigenes*", giving them an exotic character that responded to evolutionist anthropological schemes[44] (ibid., p.10). Nevertheless this attitude denied the cultural and social changes previously discussed and did not take into account the interaction between the different aspects of culture, which in fact made the existence of an absolutely pure and unchanging popular tradition virtually impossible (Burke 1978, p.22). To understand how far the notion of "folk" was, it may be useful to look at Cecil Sharp's definition. The "ideal peasant" according to Sharp (1917) was "... immune from that continuous grinding, mental pressure, due to the attempt to 'make a living', from which nearly all of us in the modern world suffer" (1932, p.xxiv). However, awareness of the hazy halo surrounding the notion of "people" and "folk" was already present in the 19th century. Joseph Jacobs (1854-1916), for example, questioned the nature of the "folk" celebrated in poems and folklore collections. Taking the word "folklore", Jacobs (1893) noted the existence of a body of literature on the second part of the term, "lore", and a scarcity of discussion on the first half, "folk" (233). An asserter of individuality, Jacobs recognised in the "folk" a creature with many heads and minds which gave birth to all literature grouped under the name of "folklore" (ibid., p.234). Jacobs did not believe in the "folk" as the originator of literary material; on the contrary, he was convinced that the "folk" was a "fraud", a mythical operation performed on a different social group (ibid.). Jacobs's point is that there must have been some kind

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[44] See chapter 3, section 3.2.1., for a discussion on evolutionism and folklore.

of initiator for the crowd (the "folk") to start collecting and handing down oral material, because "the Folk is simply a name for our ignorance: we do not know to whom a proverb, a tale, a custom, a myth owes its origin, so we say it originated among the Folk" (ibid., pp.235-36).[45]

Joseph Jacobs is certainly correct in pointing out the vagueness of the term "folk". However, to what extent the "folk" is simply a name for ignorance, it is hard to say. Considering what has been so far discussed, it appears that the term does not arise from ignorance, but rather from an intention to celebrate an aspect of culture that was felt as disappearing, in an attempt to preserve it and, perhaps, restore some of its assets. The "folk" constructed in this way became, then, a source of national pride, following a process mirrored, years later, by the evolution of the Italian "*popolo*".

2.2. ITALY

Among the elements that characterised the 19th century in Italy, a prominent position is certainly occupied by the process of unification of the country, culturally expressed in the movement of *Risorgimento*.[46] The movement celebrated the figure of the "*popolo*"; nevertheless, similarly to what had happened in England with the "folk", this figure never corresponded to the social reality of the period, which was characterised by a heterogeneous population far from the unifying nature that the "*popolo*" embodied.

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[45] Joseph Jacobs's position is further discussed in chapter 6, section 6.2.1.

[46] *Risorgimento*, the period of Italian history where the territory was politically unified, is generally identified in the years from 1848 (beginning of conflict between the House of Savoy and the Austrian empire) to 1870 (annexation of Rome), though intellectually its origins date back to the early 19th century.

2.2.1. Social situation in the 19th century

Throughout the 19th century, Italy was a nation in the making. Two wars (*guerre d'indipendenza*) were fought, followed by the creation, in 1861, of the first parliament of the newly united nation. The debate over *Risorgimento*, which has often pointed out the socially inconsistent character of Italian unification,[47] represents a useful basis for analysing the position of the organism celebrated in folklore collections: the "*popolo*".

Until well into the 19th century, Italy[48] was still essentially a rural country,[49] with an economy mostly based on agriculture.[50] The various attempts to modernise

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[47] It has been argued that *Risorgimento* was a process which started from "above" and moved downwards, taking the *popolo* as its object rather than its subject (De Paolis, Isnenghi, De Boni and Pampaloni 1976, p.579). Carlo Cipolla (1995) notes that in the wars fought during *Risorgimento*, the rural population was absent (136). Sabbatucci and Vidotto (2002) do not entirely agree with the vision of a revolution "from above" and argue that different strata of society (students, intellectuals, middle-class people) took an active part in the process of unification (207). However, this only indicates a bourgeois involvement and does not support the idea of participation on behalf of the "*popolo*". Although throughout the century there had been various attempts by intellectuals to reach the people with ideologically charged newspapers and pamphlets, the rural population could not read and needed an "interpreter" to gain access to any message conveyed by the newspaper, and such interpreters were often bourgeois themselves: "Ma il 'popolo' non sa leggere... le classi subalterne abbisognano d'una ulteriore mediazione – qualche 'intellettuale' locale, prete, maestro, medico: tutti 'borghesi' – se vuole accedere al contenuto del messaggio" (De Paolis Isnenghi, De Boni and Pampaloni 1976, p.580). Perhaps *Risorgimento* was not such an "élitist" movement as De Paolis *et al.* seem to suggest, but nor it was the triumphal march depicted by Samuel Smiles, where Giuseppe Garibaldi "... won battle after battle", entering Naples "as a first-class passenger in a railway train from the south" (1880, p.184). For a general overview on Italian *Risorgimento*, see Lepre 1978; Montanelli 1971. Alfonso Scirocco (1998) advocates an approach that takes into account different, even opposing positions. Alberto Castelli (1997) (ed) presents various articles in reply to the debate over the myth of *Risorgimento* held in 1935 by the antifascist movement *Giustizia e Libertà*. To evaluate different positions over the idea of *Risorgimento*, see Croce 1967; Gramsci 1971.

[48] Until 1861 to be intended, geographically, as the Italian peninsula.

[49] Was there an "industrial revolution" in Italy? If the terms are used to indicate a rapid transformation of social and economic structures, similar to the one that took place in Great Britain, then the answer is "no". In Italy industrial development was very slow; Guido Pescosolido (1994) argues that the scarcity of infrastructures and energy resources, together with a conservative mentality, made an industrial revolution like the British one virtually impossible in the years of *Risorgimento* (65). Only during the second half of the 20th century was the country able to become a prevailing industrial economy (Ceserani and De Federicis 1986, p.72). According to Giorgio Roverato, however, historians tend to agree on fixing Italian industrial development at the end of the 19th century, when Italy joined the Triple Alliance (1882) and opened up to industrialisation and outward expansion (De Paolis, Insenghi, De Boni and Pampaloni 1976, p.973).

[50] Saying that Italy's economy was based on agriculture does not mean that agriculture was qualitatively developed, but rather that the country did not or had not yet witnessed an industrial revolution that would bring a flow of capital to be invested in other areas. Agriculture was still based on a feudal system of latifundia and mortmain that could not support national economy (Mack Smith 1999, p.xviii). This already weak economy had further been debilitated by the costs of two wars and by a national debt which was the sum of debts previously contracted by the now unified states (De Paolis, Isnenghi, De Boni and Pampaloni 1976, p.708).

agriculture only slowly made their way in Northern Italy, particularly in Piedmont and Lombardy with the growth of an agrarian and industrial bourgeoisie (Mack Smith 1999, pp. 136-37). Central and Southern Italy were still ruled by the house of Bourbon,[51] whose feudal rights had only recently been abolished[52] (Ceserani and De Federicis 1986, p.35).

After the above mentioned wars, fought in 1848 and 1859 against the Austrian empire, and after many political negotiations, in 1861 the kingdom of Italy was officially proclaimed, though the acquisition of Veneto and Rome had not yet been accomplished. Thus, during the last decades of the 19th century Italy became a unified country with a population still mainly formed by poor farmers, who were mostly illiterate.[53] A political and administrative unity had nevertheless been reached; it was now necessary to build a social and cultural unity, because in 1861 Italy was a country where the concept of "national identity" was unfamiliar to most of the people who populated its regions. Instead of feeling Italian, the population reflected a more parochial spirit, a spirit that was enclosed within the sound of the church bells, which signified all the culture shared by a given community (Simeone 1978, p.546). It made sense: in a period when the road system was poor and public transport virtually inexistent,[54] the life of rural people revolved around the only cultural focus available, the village church. Despite this fragmented reality, or possibly because of it, the invention of what has been called "*religione laica della*

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[51] One of those monarchies defined by Samuel Smiles as "... petty absolutists, who governed the people with a rod of iron" (1880, p.183). In a quite controversial book, Antonio Pagano (2002) questions the traditional and much celebrated notion that saw in the unification of Italy a fight for freedom and independence from foreign domination, arguing that it was instead a mere attempt to modify the political set-up to the advantage of a different, although not less "foreign", political class.

[52] In Sicily they were legally abolished in 1812, but in the countryside *corvées* were compulsory until 1837 (Mack Smith 1999, p.102).

[53] The census taken in 1861 presented a population predominantly rural and formed by agricultural labourers, landowners and métayers (Cipolla 1995, p.97).

[54] In the pre-unitary period the development of railways was slow and local in character; between 1848 and 1859 Piedmont could count on 850 km of railway network, whereas in the Kingdom of the

Patria", the secular religion of the Fatherland, contributed to the creation of an ideal Italy where loyalty to the nation, a sense of unification and other colourful images abounded (Bacigalupi and Fossati 1986, pp.100-101). "E noi amiamo la patria nostra" wrote Cesare Cantù (1804-1895), "amiamo l'Italia, questo cielo così ridente, questo clima temperato, questo suolo così fecondo..." (1837, p.163). Schoolbooks faithfully reported and celebrated the idea of *patria* together with that of divinity and monarchy ("*Dio Re Patria*"), which took on the role of moral judges and repositories of social order (Vergani and Meacci 1984, p.61). The association Italy = *patria* was a new one,[55] and children needed to absorb it through readings that reflected such a symbol and taught a sense of national unity (ibid.): "La mia patria è anche tutta la bella Italia, ove si parla uno stesso dolcissimo linguaggio, con un solo Re, con una stessa Religione" (Tarra 1864, p.200). The love for one's *patria* was expressed through words: "... io ti venero e t'amo con tutta l'anima mia, e sono altero d'esser nato da te, e di chiamarmi figliuol tuo" (De Amicis 1886/2000, p.226); but it also required action: "io voglio che la patria abbia in me un cittadino probo, utile, laborioso" (Cantù 1837, p.163). And action *par excellence* was represented by hard work. "Lavorate dunque, agricoltori, se volete essere utili alla patria, se volete essere veramente uomini..." encouraged Cesare Revel in 1869, "lavorate e sarete amati, stimati e benedetti" (91). And Giulio Tarra added: "Bravi fanciulli! Amiamo Dio, la famiglia e siamo buoni, ed allora saremo bravi soldati e cittadini, ed ameremo la patria davvero!" (1864, p.182).

Two Sicilies the total length barely covered 100 km (*I giorni della storia d'Italia*, pp.77-78). The railway system reached an extension of 13,964 km only in 1891 (Cipolla 1995, pp.107-108).

[55] In 1825 Ugo Foscolo, addressing a group of working-class people, wrote: "Voi, miseri, dovete avere pane, prete e patibolo; ma in queste tre cose, santissime come pur sono, non però sta la patria" (1978, p.91).

2.2.2. Dialects and national language

Risorgimento was not only a period of socio-economic and political change. Debates on the language that was to be adopted nationwide became widespread and animated, because the unification of Italy had not automatically brought with it a linguistic unity. The Romantic age[56] gave the discussion on national language a surge up to that moment never felt, although not for intellectual or literary merits, but rather for political reasons (De Mauro 1991, p.4).[57]

Without a linguistic unity,[58] people still spoke local languages, i.e. their dialects.[59] Advocating the diffusion of a national language, Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1873) and his followers suggested that the Florentine dialect[60] was to be used and that its diffusion was to be facilitated by its teaching in schools (Bellosi and Savini 1980, p.18). This suggestion however was not entirely successful as hoped, because it was

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[56] There has been an attempt to deny the existence of a Romantic movement in Italy. The idea was clearly put forward in an essay by Gina Martegiani, *Il Romanticismo italiano non esiste* (1908). After analysing Romanticism in Germany, Britain and France, Martegiani argues that Italian Romanticism lacked those aspects that were crucial to Romanticism itself, namely individualism and cosmopolitanism, replaced by a nationalist movement that reflected the striving of a collectivity rather than the battle of a single individual (93 onwards). Martegiani acknowledges the presence of a few Romantic personalities; nevertheless she is convinced that this is not enough to say that Italy witnessed a Romantic movement (209). Martegiani's thesis has been praised by Benedetto Croce (1924), who agrees that Italy lacked the historical foundations for Romanticism, i.e. mysticism, philosophy, a sense of myth and an interest in medieval poetry (216). Nevertheless, Croce also admits that a total rejection of Romantic ideas cannot be possible, because the movement had a general influence over Europe (218). How plausible is Martegiani's argument is difficult to say. One cannot avoid wondering how useful it is to discuss the existence of an Italian Romanticism with hindsight. Giuseppe Petronio (1960) remarks that the important thing is not to establish whether there was a Romantic movement, as to how Romantic the literati of the time considered themselves to be: "a noi, qui, interessa non stabilire se, per esempio, Leopardi *sia stato* romantico, ma solo se *si sia ritenuto* o se *sia stato ritenuto* tale..." (6; emphasis as in original). And indeed Giuseppe Mazzini (1862), somehow confuting in advance Martegiani's argument, clearly sees in the battles and the movement of *Risorgimento* the distinctive features of Italian Romanticism: "nessuno diceva che il Romanticismo era in Italia la battaglia della libertà contro l'oppressione, la battaglia dell'Indipendenza contro ogni forma o norma non scelta da noi in virtù della nostra ispirazione individuale e del pensiero collettivo che fremeva nelle viscere del paese. *Noi lo dicemmo*" (12; emphasis added).

[57] Political life was dominated by the principle of nationality and in a country like Italy, for so long formed by several subnational states, the idea of a shared language tradition acquired a political meaning and became a symbol of national unity (De Mauro 1991, p.4).

[58] In the years of unification only 2.5% of the population spoke Italian; in other words, the Italian language was far from representing the newly born nation and all its inhabitants (De Mauro 1991, p.43).

[59] Although the term "dialect" suggests a corruption of the national language, these idioms had in fact been independently developing from Latin since the early Middle Ages. Bellosi and Savini (1980) note that the origins of this phenomenon are to be found in historical events preceding the consolidation of Latin (8).

hindered by several practical factors. Firstly, it necessarily implied a school system that could reach every corner of the nation and all social classes; however, the period did not see the creation of a widespread Italian school system, as the financial situation was precarious, the number of teachers was scarce and far too many people could not afford regular education (De Mauro 1991, p.47).[61] Furthermore, the suggestion made by Manzoni had privileged a sort of "caste language" that the majority of people did not speak and it was inconceivable to imagine that it would immediately penetrate every corner of Italy and all layers of society, especially since the project put forward was so forceful (Bellosi and Savini 1980, p.18). Finally, Manzoni's suggestion was frowned upon by linguist Graziadio Isaia Ascoli (1829-1907), who was convinced that a national language could only be reached by promoting a democratic project based on social, economic and cultural transformations, which would encourage people to use the language naturally (ibid., p.19).[62] Nevertheless, Ascoli's call for a social and cultural development that would break through the barriers of dialects went virtually unheard for the same reason that caused Manzoni's to be unsuccessful, i.e. the lack of financial allocation to fight illiteracy (ibid.). Widespread schooling was therefore required for a national language to exist. Besides a slow increase in the educational level, several other factors eventually contributed to the diffusion of Italian. Towards the end of the 19th century, migrations began to take place not only to foreign countries, but also from the countryside to the cities, where the middle class was more likely to speak the national language.[63] Urbanisation generated a sort of osmosis among the population

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[60] Precisely, the dialect spoken by the educated middle class (Bellosi and Savini 1980, p.18).

[61] In 1861 78% of the total population was still illiterate (Dogliani 2002, p.33). According to Bellosi and Savini (1980), in 1874 the percentage of illiterates was below 50% only in Piedmont and Lombardy (20).

[62] On the so called *questione della lingua*, see also Ascoli 1975; Dardano 1974; Vitale 1960.

[63] Of some relevance for folklore studies is the fact that, while Italian gained ground, local dialects tended to recede. Bellosi and Savini (1980) speak of a double recess: 1) in the number of dialect

and, consequently, a weakening in the use of local dialects, while an increase in the number of public places where Italian was spoken (schools, bureaux, etc.) also contributed to the mechanism of language spread (De Mauro 1991, p.71).

2.2.3. Education and educating

Elementary education was already compulsory in pre-unification Italy;[64] after the unification, a national law extended compulsory education to the whole kingdom but, despite much advocating,[65] it was not supported by a proportionate investment on behalf of the state (Cipolla 1995, p.96).[66] New jobs and new working conditions were responsible for a cultural and sociological mutation within the labouring classes, a mutation that collided with a ruling class reluctant to grant a degree of education that would threaten social order (Vergani and Meacci 1984, p.7). Mass schooling was not frowned upon; on the contrary it was advocated and deemed necessary (ibid.). However, the level and quality of education was intended to instruct people to adapt to their working conditions rather than to modify their social position (ibid.). Quite eloquently Cesare Revel, in his book *Il libro dell'operaio* (1866), advises workers not to go beyond the place fate provided for them and their children: "per altra parte non avvenga che, invaghiti delle buone disposizioni dei vostri figli, e celando un'ambizione non permessa... senza accertare il vero vostro stato, concediate agli stessi di percorrere la via lunga e dispendiosa degli studi..." (28). And a little further, almost to justify this, he adds, "del resto, è forse necessario

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speakers and 2) in the dialects themselves, which tended to draw nearer to the national language because of the impact that the varieties spoken in cities had on all dialect systems (24).

[64] As early as 1818 in the Lombard-Venetian area and 1822 in the Kingdom of Sardinia (Cipolla 1995, p.96). The following provide detailed local pictures of education and literacy level in pre-unification Italy: Brambilla 1991; Milanesi 1991; Toscani 1991; Ferraresi 1991; Fioretto 1991.

[65] Cesare Revel (1866) complains that education is something many still shamefully lack and celebrates it as a "cure-all", "... quella da cui tutto dovete aspettare" (25).

[66] For example, the Kingdom of Sardinia had allocated only 1% of public expenditure between 1830 and 1860; the kingdom of Italy earmarked 1.7% in 1863, and 2.5% at the end of the century (Cipolla 1995, pp.96-97).

che tutti si diano allo studio delle scienze giuridiche, economiche, e via? Mai no; ben anzi difetta il paese nostro, eminentemente agricolo, di uomini pratici, tecnici..." (ibid., p.29).[67] Vergani and Meacci seem to suggest that the education praised and exalted was the education that taught the labouring poor models of resignation to their own condition, tameness and reverential behaviour (1984, p.7).[68] "Non più in là", say Vergani and Meacci, not farther than the shift from being subjected in the countryside to being subjected in factories (ibid., p.8).[69] This could explain why Cesare Revel, after stating in his introduction that he had at heart the improvement of social conditions among the working classes (1866, p.15), goes on condemning any sort of rebellion against the upper classes: "quante volte non v'intesi a maledire tanto il primo [capital] che le seconde [machines], e quanti, che io non posso chiamare altrimenti che *nemici vostri*, cercarono di confermare in voi tali pregiudizi..." (ibid., p.68; emphasis as in original). Such a position is further

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[67] A thought already expressed in an 1851 schoolbook: "Fingete, che gli artigiani, ed i contadini cessino a un tratto di faticare. Che saria della società umana?" (Franceschi Ferrucci, pp.108-109).

[68] A similar attitude is visible in late-18th-century British debates over the subject. In 1792 for instance, Sarah Trimmer promoted the increase in number of charity schools and suggested making "... such learning as general as possible" (4), so that children of destitute families would receive schooling in such a way to become "... good apprentices, and conscientious, faithful servants" (ibid., p.19). Trimmer also warned against any "excess" in education, as the above mentioned people "... should not be educated in such a manner as to set them above the occupations of humble life..." (ibid., p.8).

[69] According to Bacigalupi and Fossati (1986), the acculturation of the working class after the unification of Italy was an issue that attracted the interest of politicians, landowners and the bourgeoisie, who felt the need to culturally "conquer" the masses, in order to build a new state on morality and progress (6). In this sense the schoolbook acquired the central function of moral teaching (ibid.). As Adriana Chemello (1991) writes, "la forte tensione educativa... s'impone come necessità di una scienza istruttiva ed educativa del popolo italiano finalmente approdato all'unità nazionale" (vi). Educating and giving the "*popolo*" a moral were the two steps considered necessary in order to mould the moral conscience of workers (ibid., p.43). Thus, education and work are two terms that seem to go hand in hand in the formation of the new state: "il popolo italiano viene ora chiamato a collaborare con razionalità e con affezione al lavoro, al progresso morale e civile della nazione (ibid., p.45). Work acquires, in Cesare Revel's books, even an aura of sacredness. It is a need, a necessity and the means to attain bliss: "... è un dovere a nessun altro secondo, il cui adempimento però è tale da rendere pienamente beato e contento chi vi pon mano. Il lavoro noi lo riteniamo un vero benefizio impartito dal Creatore alle sue creature..." (1866, p.17). Children are taught that work is a moral duty, that sometimes it is more important than education (Vergani and Meacci 1984, p.73). A paradoxical conclusion, if one sees it reported in a schoolbook: "Poche settimane dopo, Manfredo [who has just left school to get a job and thus help his mother] consegnava alla mamma il suo primo salario: due lire e cinquanta centesimi. Non era un tesoro, ma il giovinetto si sentì in quel giorno felice più d'un principe. Egli cominciava a essere *utile*" (Baccini 1889, p.99; emphasis as in original).

reinforced in Revel's later book *Il libro dell'agricoltore* (1869), where education is welcomed and supported, provided it is useful for the progress of agriculture (20). The need for mass schooling responded to the fear of unrest that was not uncommon in 19th-century Italy (Chemello 1991, p.32).[70] The working class showed a dangerous tendency toward insubordination,[71] and therefore it needed to be re-directed by being taught order and morality (Bacigalupi and Fossati 1986, p.32). A good citizen was expected to acquire and follow those values that characterised a civilised society; if not, one would fall back into the dreaded *plebe*, the populace, which is "... brutta e sgradevole nella estraneità dei suoi atteggiamenti sempre sul punto di trascorrere in qualche eccesso" (ibid., pp.49 and 53).[72] On the contrary, an educated and working man was positively described as "... uomo onesto, probo, coraggioso, capace, intelligente" (Revel 1866, p.18).

2.2.4. An idealised "popolo"

In a situation where political identities needed to be formed, it was important that a sense of belonging to and identification with a nation involved the whole population. In order to achieve this, the population would have to be made aware of being a "*popolo*". As Luigi Lombardi Satriani (1974) notes, under Romantic influences the "*popolo*" became the object of a mythicizing operation which however left virtually untouched the question of equality (90).[73] Alberto Mario Cirese (1972) highlights

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[70] For example in 1890 the Milanese newspaper *L'Italia* published a letter by a group of unemployed workers who signed the letter "alcuni falegnami disoccupati, che hanno fame, ma che non si firmano per la paura di venire arrestati come sobillatori o rei di qualche altro reato" ("Le ragioni di una parte degli operai disoccupati", p.2).

[71] Between 1850 and 1860 the *movimento operaio* grew in importance, despite the fact that it did not originate directly from industrialisation, which, as already mentioned, developed some decades later (Lisanti 1986, p.9).

[72] Ugo Foscolo (1825) described the participants of a riot: "... le loro fiaccole che mi mostravano faccie pallide atroci, e labbra tremanti di rabbia, e occhi pieni di stupidità o di delirio, e i loro corpi barcollanti d'ubbriachezza e di furore baccante..." (1978, p.91).

[73] On the contrary, Antonio Gramsci's definition of *popolo* excludes an ahistorical culturally homogeneous community, replacing it with a body of various cultural layers that can combine and

the blurry character given to the notion of "*popolo*" during Romanticism, noting how difficult it is to mark its boundaries and to identify the features that distinguish it from the "*non-popolo*": "... questo 'popolo' di cui poi non si dice dove cominci e dove finisca, e in che cosa si differenzi dal 'non-popolo'" (16). He also points out how a popular soul would fit into a universal category which presents the "*popolo*" as a homogeneous entity endowed with eternal essence and historical presence, an entity whose products are no longer ignored, but seen in their originality and valued for their unifying purpose (ibid., pp.14-15).

The idea that a *popolo* that we may call Italian did not exist at the time was well expressed in the thought of contemporary writers and men of letters. In 1820-22, Alessandro Manzoni defined the *popolo italiano* as a "... volgo disperso che nome non ha" (1992, p.152). In 1843 Vincenzo Gioberti (1801-1852) noted that the *popolo italiano*

> ... è un desiderio e non un fatto, un presupposto e non una realtà, un nome e non una cosa, e non so pur se si trovi nel nostro vocabolario. V'ha bensì ... una stirpe italiana congiunta di sangue, di religione, di lingua scritta ed illustre; ma divisa di governi, di leggi, d'istituti, di favella popolare, di costumi ... di tradizioni (1938, p.71).

In 1847, in what would later become the national anthem, Goffredo Mameli (1827-1849) expressed his regret that

> ...noi siam da secoli
>
> calpesti, derisi

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that are not always identifiable within specific historical communities (1950/1996, p.268). Gramsci advocated a notion that refused to see folklore as an eccentricity or a picturesque element, and conceived of it as a serious study through which a new popular culture would be born, bridging the gap between modern culture and the actual popular culture (ibid., p.264). For a discussion of folklore as a product of subaltern classes, see also Rauty 1976; De Martino 1976; Angioni 1972.

perché non siam Popolo

perché siam divisi" (1927, p.76).

And in his posthumously published memoirs (1867), Massimo D'Azeglio (1798-1866) lamented that "...pur troppo s'è fatta l'Italia, ma non si fanno gl'Italiani" (1908, p.8). As Vincenzo Gioberti noted, it was therefore a potential *popolo*, although not a factual *popolo* as yet (1843/1938, p.71).

Writers such as Edmondo De Amicis (1846-1898) tried to instil through their books a strong love of country and a sense of national unity in their readers. For instance, in one of the first episodes in De Amicis's book *Cuore* (1886), the teacher is introducing a new schoolboy from Southern Italy to his Turin-based class, and addresses the whole classroom with an invitation to welcome the new Calabrian classmate: "... fategli vedere che un ragazzo *italiano*, in qualunque scuola *italiana* metta il piede, ci trova dei fratelli" (2000, p.10; emphasis added). He then addresses the most brilliant of his pupils and invites him to welcome the Calabrian boy: "... dà l'abbraccio del benvenuto, a nome di tutta la classe, al nuovo compagno; l'abbraccio dei figliuoli del Piemonte al figliuolo della Calabria" (ibid.). The strength with which this sort of "patriotic campaign" was carried out probably finds an answer in the general feelings of the population, revealed in the words of Pasquale Villari: "chi paragona l'Italia che sognammo a scuola con l'Italia che vediamo intorno a noi, resta sorpreso da una grande differenza... l'Italia unita, indipendente e libera, si direbbe che ha lasciato il tempo che ha trovato" (1872, p.1). These feelings are well described in the following excerpt, from Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's novel *Il gattopardo* (1958), set in 1860s Sicily:

Mai siamo stati tanto divisi come da quando siamo uniti. Torino non vuol cessare di essere capitale, Milano trova la nostra amministrazione inferiore a quella austriaca, Firenze ha paura che le portino via le opere d'arte, Napoli piange per le industrie che perde, e qui, qui in Sicilia sta covando qualche grosso, irrazionale guaio ..." (Lampedusa 2002, p.231).

As noted earlier, the absence of a widespread sense of belonging to the nation can be seen as the result of a fragmented socio-political and linguistic situation that had long witnessed the presence of several subnational states within which cultural exchange and migratory patterns were limited by local laws, as well as by the scarcity of transport and infrastructures. With a focus necessarily on local communities, loyalty to the nation was not a fact to be given for granted, as the people who populated these territories did not respond to the desired idea of "*popolo italiano*". However, the lack of a "*popolo*" that could truly represent the Italian spirit was also fostered by another factor, the common belief that much of the rural population constituted a demoted organism. This actually suggests that the notion of "*popolo*" as a collective and homogeneous entity was not entirely missing. Something similar existed and was called *volgo*. Nonetheless, the Italian *volgo* could not serve the unification cause. The *volgo*, suggested Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837) in his *Saggio sopra gli errori popolari degli antichi* (1815), was characterised by intellectual poverty and gullibility, being even unable to see the mistakes and superstitions in the traditions it relied on (1997, p.23). The only solution was a change in status, in other words the only way out of ignorance was to cease being *volgo* (ibid.). Analogously, Giovanni Berchet (1783-1851) made a clear distinction between the *volgo* and what he considered "*popolo*". In his 1816 essay *Lettera semiseria di Grisostomo al suo figliuolo*, considered the *manifesto* of the Romantic movement in Italy, Berchet identified three categories of men: "*Ottentoti*", "*Parigini*" and the rest of humanity

(1912, pp.16-17). The first category derogatorily referred to the lower strata of society, the second to a social layer that had become too civilised, refined and affected; in between there was a rather broad group of individuals that had found a balance between rationality and emotions (ibid.). This category was, according to Berchet, *il popolo*: a class of individuals that included all those who, although learned, had retained an aptitude for feelings (ibid.). The "*popolo*", therefore, in Berchet's view was a sort of middle class, to be intended in a selective way, in that it excluded the part of the population still referred to as *volgo*. The *volgo* even spoke a different language: "... i nobili hanno anche senza volerlo un dialetto diverso da quello del volgo" (Cesarotti 1785/1969, p.22).

However, it had become important to create an organism that encompassed all strata of society and that at the same time provided the cultural dignity that would transform a heterogeneous group into a standardised symbol of national identity. One way of attaining this was through popular culture. Popular culture in the 19th century had a twofold meaning: a culture *for* the people, expressed through schoolbooks, almanacs and educational material, and a culture *by* the people, developed through folklore collections (Carpi 1981, p.455). These two aspects are linked to one another. "Amiamo il popolo" stated Niccolò Tommaseo (1802-1874)[74] "e con riverenza di discepoli ammaestriamolo" (1841, p.27). At the same time, educating the "*popolo*" required the creation of a concept of "*popolo*" that could serve as a basis for inspirational readings and whose final receiver was the population itself (Bacigalupi and Fossati 1986, p.7). As mentioned, at the beginning of the 19th century a general tendency drew a negative image of a morally corrupted population in constant need of being redeemed (ibid., pp.52-53). The image of the "*popolo*" was thus intentionally constructed, evaluated and given to the people in its

"clean" form, with the aim of marking the transition from a reality of regional cultures to the idealisation of a national culture (Carpi 1981, p.458). It had become clear that presenting a negative image of "*popolo*" was counterproductive. For instance, as early as 1837 Cesare Cantù was saying that "... chi voglia veramente far libri popolari, conviene proprio mettersi in mezzo a questo popolo: non figurarselo come una bestia sciocca e sfrenata... senza principi, senza costumi... tutta sensi e fantasia... Forse l'avrete vista tale cercandola solo nelle bettole o ne' mali luoghi" (129). The "*popolo*" is not, suggests Cantù, a wild beast; on the contrary it is formed by "gente operosa... buoni contadini... tanti che lavorano tutto il nato dì..." (ibid.).

The contribution that the ideal "*popolo*" could give in terms of loyalty to the nation acquired visibility in folklore collections, as the material collected by folklorists came to be seen as a heritage that culturally represented the roots of the Italian nation and therefore granted its existence in virtue of its cohesive qualities. Building a "*popolo*" through folklore material had the purpose of moulding that symbol that would subsequently become the repository of a glorious national heritage. One of the first scholars to deal with popular material was Giovanni Berchet. After having attempted a definition of "*popolo*" in 1816, Berchet took a slightly different view in 1837 and gave the notion of "*popolo*" a more accentuated Romantic connotation. In his introduction to the *Vecchie romanze spagnuole*, where he translated Spanish *romances*, Berchet stressed the fact that, in choosing what he was going to translate, he had tried to follow the genuine voice of the "*popolo*": "Nell'andare scegliendo il poco ch'io voleva tradurre, mi sono ingegnato di tener dietro alla vergine voce del popolo..." (1837/1912, p.111). However, while the "*popolo*" presented in the 1816 *Lettera semiseria* was restricted to a sort of middle class, in the *Vecchie romanze* Berchet appears to accept the idea that a wider social group was capable of

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[74] For whom the "*popolo*" was "... parte della nazione; la più numerosa e la più nobil parte" (1852.

producing literary material, *romances*, as he comes to the conclusion that popular poetry is a poetry directly produced and not only appreciated by the "*popolo*": "... e per tale [poesia popolare] intendo quella che è direttamente prodotta e non soltanto gradita dal popolo..."(ibid.). One thing catches the eye: Berchet is applying the phrase "*poesia popolare*" to the idealised notion of "*popolo*", implying that a) this "*popolo*" exists, and b) that it is no longer a negative element; on the contrary, being able to produce positive consequences (poetry), it proves to be a model to draw inspiration from.

This change of attitude is even clearer in Niccolò Tommaseo, who ascribed popular songs and poems not only aesthetic, but also ethnic and ethical values, i.e. the capability of providing information on national history and of revealing the soul of the nation in question (Cirese 1958, pp.20-21). Indeed, Tommaseo's collection of *Canti popolari toscani, corsi, illirici, greci* (1841-42) reveals a philological concern for popular songs, because these are considered as real historical documents: "... altri da altre parti d'Italia raccorranno simili tesori, nè li ratterrà falso pudore della stranezza del linguaggio e della semplicità delle immagini, che questa e quella sono altresì documento di storia prezioso" (Tommaseo 1841, p.25).

The passage from *volgo* to "*popolo*" seemed to be on its way. In 1855, folklore collector Oreste Marcoaldi developed the notion of "*popolo*" to include those categories that had been previously referred to as *volgo*. In this way he enlarged the semantic boundaries of "*popolo*", considering the people among whom he collected material no longer simply ignorant and gullible peasants, but genuine tradition bearers and therefore full-fledged members of the "*popolo*":

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p.719).

> È da avvisare pertanto innanzi tutto, che il popolo d'Italia nostra è popolo per natura più d'ogni altro musico e poeta, talchè a raddolcire od ingannare il lavoro, sul labbro di chi si affatica in aprire il duro solco e di chi suda nelle operose officine, odi d'ogni parte armoniosi canti ispirati dalla benefica natura... (1855, p.10).[75]

Since they were seen as living repositories of national traditions, Marcoaldi concluded the introduction to his collection of songs with the invitation to go and collect this material first-hand, directly from the mouths of those who retained it: "Scendiamo nelle casipole di questi poverelli che pur sono uomini!" (ibid., p.40). The fact that the notion of "*popolo*" had been expanded to include the *volgo* can be recognised also in folklore collector Ettore Scipione Righi (1833-1894), who made a difference between *poesia popolare* and *poesia nazionale*, the former being defined as "... il linguaggio primitivo delle nazioni, creato spontaneamente dal cuore, uscito da labbra e menti non culte, senza studio od orifizio di sorta...", the latter as "... opera invece di erudito intelletto..." (1863, p.x).[76] What is interesting here is the fact that the "*popolo*", i.e. that part of the population who was not "*erudito*", is ascribed a creative potential that the former *volgo* (equally unlearned) did not possess. The "*popolo*" is capable of actually producing *poesia*, something spontaneous, simple, naive, "*primitivo*", but nevertheless poetic in its essence.

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[75] I would like to draw attention to the vocabulary that has been used here. As noted in section 2.2.3., the tendency was to consider education as necessary, as long as it could assure a serene adaptation to one's social condition, especially when it was that of farm or factory workers. Here Marcoaldi is using a terminology that creates the image of "happy workers", aware of the hardness of their jobs ("*il duro solco*"), but willing to put much effort in it ("*si affatica*", "*suda*") and keeping a positive attitude towards their conditions ("*raddolcire*", "*operose officine*", "*benefica natura*").

[76] Benedetto Croce (see also chapter 6, section 6.2.1.) makes a similar distinction between *poesia popolare* and *poesia d'arte*.

In the last decades of the 19th century[77] an interesting factor arose: the more one collected oral material, the clearer it became that this material was definitely local and not national in character; it did not reflect the dream of a united *popolo* in a unified nation; rather it reflected the town, the countryside, the local (Simeone 1978, p.546). The work of folklore collectors therefore seems therefore to have underlined regional differences rather than national unity (ibid.). Giuseppe Pitré[78] for instance, followed the idea that, in order to gather all the memories of a community, one had to plunge into the life of that community in all its aspects (Cocchiara 1947/1981, pp.171-172). For this reason, he made clear that any tradition contained in his *Biblioteca* had been collected from living voices, since any intervention, any alteration of the text would have belittled its importance as a true document of Sicilian traditions (Pitré 1875, p.xvi). This attitude led him to reject the suggestion of translating dialect into Italian and to state that, in order to feel the delicacy of the stories he had collected, one had to understand Sicilian, since translating them would have meant distorting the narrator's personality (Cocchiara 1951, pp.63-64).

Although it has to be said that regional differences did not necessarily highlight divisions, as the various manifestations of regional orality may have been perceived as different interpretations of the same Italian spirit (Bronzini 1994, p.71),[79] it can

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[77] A period that saw an increasing number of educational and inspirational publications chiefly scientific and technical in character, aimed to operate among the "*ceti popolari*" the cultural transformation required by the emerging industrialisation (Monetini 1995, p.509). It is the period in which scientific information becomes popularised through the so called *collane popolari*, e.g. the *Biblioteca educativa per il popolo italiano*, published by Unione Tipografico-Editrice di Torino, the *Biblioteca del popolo*, by Sonzogno, and the *Biblioteca utile*, by Emilio Treves in Milan (ibid., p.512-13)

[78] Probably the most famous and prolific of 19th-century Italian folklorists, Sicilian Giuseppe Pitré (1841-1916) was also a medical doctor. In 1870-1913 he published the *Biblioteca delle tradizioni popolari* in 25 volumes and in 1882 he founded the Italian folklore journal *Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari*.

[79] This attitude was also due to the diffusion of comparative methods in folklore, which looked for different variants of the same story in various regions, thus highlighting what folklorist Alessandro D'Ancona in 1857 had referred to as the moral and sentimental bond that shaped the *popolo italiano* (Bronzini 1994, p.75). Among the asserters of comparative methods in Italy is Costantino Nigra (1828-1907), author of the collection *Canti popolari del Piemonte* (1888). Nigra drew from comparative methods to apply the idea of substratum to the origins of popular songs.

nevertheless be concluded that the shape taken by the concept of "*popolo*" at the end of the 19th century shows an evolution towards individuality. A parallel can be drawn between the development of the "*popolo*" and that of language. As one was trying to achieve a linguistic unity, likewise the work of intellectuals pointed to a homogeneous image of "*popolo*" that was to emphasise an Italian spirit and whose nature was meant to encourage a sense of belonging to the nation. However, as it will be argued in the next chapter, the folklore material gathered for this purpose came out of the mouths of single individuals with different language and traditions, and therefore far from belonging to a homogeneous collectivity. As it was the case with the national language issue, the folkloric notion of "*popolo*" revealed a progression which toned down the initial enthusiastic call, in the awareness that fragmentation can perhaps be cancelled at a political, administrative and geographical level, but that when dealing with its impact on culture and people's attitude, the process is slower and more complex.

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In the 19th century, England and Italy went through structural changes that brought along periods of ferment. Both areas saw deep transformations in society. The motives behind these transformations were different and responded to local realities. Nevertheless, they resulted in similar results, i.e. the creation of collective entities that had their counterparts in the working classes, but that did not bear much resemblance to them. In England, the notion of "folk" was inspired by the idealisation of the agricultural labourer as an answer to the destabilising effects of industrialisation and to the need of having a national Arcadia where the perceived values of the country (tradition, stability, order) could be preserved and handed

down to future generations. The "folk" was a notion taken from a past that had to be protected, in order not be "swallowed up" by new subverting forces in society. In Italy the idea of "*popolo*" fermented in a similar way, but took a different direction. The myth of the past that had celebrated the "folk" in England countries could not be successful in a country where past meant poverty and underdevelopment, a country still virtually untouched by the industrial revolution and so eager for renovation. Italy, far from celebrating its *volgo*, was looking at the future, and its future was in a nationalised "*popolo*", the product that could best represent Italian unification.

England and Italy moved from different roots and took different directions for the creation of their symbols; yet they followed a similar process, the idealisation of an already existing social group, stimulated by a similar need, i.e. escaping an unpleasant situation while at the same time creating and supporting the glory of a nation. The "creature with many heads and minds" that Joseph Jacobs had devised lost, in the process of idealisation, all its heads and became "the collectivity", a single entity more similar to a container of tales and popular lore than to a hydra. Yet, Jacobs had touched on a sore point: the transformation provoked by a different perception of sources ascribed English and Italian collectivities salvific but distorted qualities. Nevertheless, because of these functions of theirs, "folk" and "*popolo*" were given[80] a substantial role in the process of nationalisation that England and Italy underwent. One way of doing so was to preserve their "product" and grant it a higher status. The product of these two entities was an orality strongly influenced by their idealisation, to the point that it also was somewhat idealised and, under the name of "folklore", became a tangible instance of national cultural heritage.

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[80] I would like to underline that these two entities did not actually play, but were *given* a role in such process, exactly because they were, ultimately, invented.

3

THE WORK OF 19TH-CENTURY FOLKLORE COLLECTORS

... if thou read these Ballads (and not sing them) the poor Ballads are undone.

Rump (1662, i,I)

The *Rump Songs*[1] were published much earlier than the age of tape-recorders and magnetic/electronic recording devices. Yet they bear traces of an awareness that is normally emphasised by these recording instruments. The collection acknowledges that ballads contain, apart from words, other elements that, when left out, cause the material to look incomplete. The *Rump*'s warning to the reader implies that there is more than words and that one should be aware of this when opening the book.

The previous chapter argued that the construction of national collectivities responding to specific social, political and cultural needs can be considered as a common ground in 19th-century English and Italian folkloristics. The perception of oral sources as "folk" or "*popolo*" generated what has been studied as "folklore", i.e. an orality interpreted as the product of a collective entity. In this chapter the idea of "collective folklore" is discussed by looking at 19th-century English and Italian folklorists and collectors gathering specimen of local folklore and translating them in print. This chapter suggests that, following the perspective so far discussed, the translation of orality in folklore collections took a specific shape, which left out individual features and stressed the idea of national cultural heritage. instead. However, it also argues that the work of folklore collectors (often carried out on site)

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[1] Published in two volumes under the title *Rump: Or An Exact Collection of the Choycest Poems and Songs Relating to the Late Times*, this collection of songs, poems and ballads was named after the Rump parliament of 1649 (recalled in 1659), of which it was meant as a satire.

had the consequence of making researchers aware exactly of what the *Rump Songs* had, two centuries earlier, warned about: oral material needs to be performed, in order to be complete. The action of systematic collecting in England and Italy, spurred by the early work of the brothers Grimm, came into being as a celebration of a collective cultural heritage but, throughout the century, underwent a transformation caused by the realisation that the material collected was moulded by the quality of narration, which is individual in character.

3.1. THE "FOREFATHERS" OF ENGLISH AND ITALIAN FOKLORE

3.1.1. Between "literature" and "folklore": authoritative voices in England and Italy

Finding an exact point of departure for the study of folklore is not an easily feasible task, because history is peppered with figures that devoted some or much of their intellectual effort to popular traditional material.[2] However, one can say that both in England and Italy an interest for such material started to arise, among men of letters, well before the 19th century, somehow paving the way for the systematic approach to folklore that took place in that century.

According to Giuseppe Cocchiara (1952), Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) drew attention on popular poetry and looked at it as true poetry, anticipating in this way the Romantic urge for "uncorrupted" lyrics (166). However, if one reads Percy's preface to the *Reliques* (1765), one notices that his position is not so definite.

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[2] For instance, Giuseppe Cocchiara (1947/1981) considers Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) a precursor of Italian popular tradition studies, despite the fact that Vico was not a folklorist in the strict sense of the word (21). In his *Scienza Nuova*, first published in 1725, Vico revealed a folkloric interest in dialects, affirming that popular idiolects represented evidence of ancient traditions and noting that "i parlari volgari debbon essere i testimoni più gravi degli antichi costumi de' popoli, che si celebrarono nel tempo ch'essi si formaron le lingue" (1946, p.178); and also "lingua di nazione antica, che si è conservata regnante finché pervenne al suo compimento, dev'essere un gran testimone de' costumi de' primi tempi del mondo." (ibid.).

In his preface, Percy expressed doubts about the value of the ballads, wondering whether "... they could be deemed worthy the attention of the public"; because of their original simplicity, he noted, the ballads "... seem to have been meerly [sic] written for the people" (1996, p.ix). This passage reveals a juxtaposition of "folklore" and "literature". The "public" that Percy is referring to is the reading public, a readership well familiar with literature. However, the ballads are made "for the people". The presence in the same sentence of two elements, "public" and "people", suggests that the two do not coincide.[3] The "people", then, could actually be the "folk", and therefore the ballads, "written for the people", are specimens of folklore.[4] Percy's attitude is useful, because the very fact that ballads "are not" literature contributes to shifting attention from the latter to the idea of folklore, thus emphasising oral traditional material as pertaining to a well defined area of human knowledge. In other words, the juxtaposition of folklore and literature by literate men could be seen as a first step towards the birth of a folklore science. This does not mean that in the work of men of letters folklore and literature are always clearly separated. In Italy, for instance, one of the first collections of popular tales is Giambattista Basile's (1570?-1632) *Pentamerone*.[5] Nonetheless, viewing this 17th-century collection of Neapolitan folktales as the work of a folklorist is a question open to debate. Giuseppe Cocchiara (1947/1981) calls Basile a storyteller who adopted folk themes and restyled them according to his own literary purpose, and

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[3] A few years later, a similar juxtaposition reappears in David Herd's preface (1776) to his collection of Scottish songs and ballads. Herd seems to suggest that popular songs present some kind of genius and taste, and therefore they should not be disregarded by those whom he calls "the Speculative and Refined" (as opposed to the "Gay and Chearful"), because the songs are "poetry and music of the heart" (1973, pp.ix and xi).

[4] In other words, one could postulate that, as the "people" is not the (literate) "public", and ballads had been written for the "people", then ballads (in their original form) are not literature. Percy, says Arthur Moore (1958), had a taste for the past and the peasant, but also a background in neoclassicism which led him to disregard the literary status of "peasant" ballads (5). Peter Burke (1978) on the contrary suggests that Percy did not link ballads with the "people", but rather with individual medieval minstrels enjoying a high status at court (5). This approach to the *Reliques* could perhaps find an

who therefore was not a folklore scholar (17). Basile was therefore retelling the tales, moulding the matter as a man of letter usually does (ibid.).[6] From another perspective, Benedetto Croce had reached the same conclusion. Croce (1929/1993) suggested that Basile actually *told* traditional folktales, imbuing them with a subjectivity that would have been the *sine qua non* for the tales to become objects of art (549). It has however to be added that, Croce viewed the tales collected by folklorists as characterless documents lacking poetic spirit and praised Basile for his reshaping of the tales (ibid., p.550). Furthermore, he made a distinction between Basile's tales and those collected by the folklorists that operated in the last decades of the 19th century, noting "... l'insipidezza ordinaria delle fiabe stenograficamente raccolte dai folkloristi o demopsicologi: documento bensì di dialetti... ma ben di rado opere di poesia" (1925, p.xviii). In this light, it is reasonable to consider Basile not as a precursor of folkloristics, but as a man of letters interested in storytelling, which however also implies that the two fields, folklore and literature, had not yet acquired the sharp contours that would come into focus in the second half of the 19th century.

Another element revealing the growing interest in folklore material is the strong influence that a given "national heritage" had on other nations. Two examples seem to have been relevant for the development of 19th-century folkloristics in England and Italy: the work of the brothers Grimm (discussed in the following section) and the case of *Ossian*. The former represented a sort of trail-blazing element for both English and Italian folklore; the latter had important repercussions on the Italian transition from a neoclassical literary canon to a Romantic exaltation of traditional material. Across the continent, the reception of the *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* took

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explanation in Percy's manipulation of material, meant to give shape to a "publishable" (and therefore "worthy") text.

[5] Also called *Lo Cunto de li Cunti*, the *Pentamerone* was published posthumously in 1634-36.

[6] "Il *Pentamerone*" notes Saverio Strati (1995) "ha una sua organicità quasi da romanzo ben strutturato" (xxvi).

place with an attitude which appears different from that it had witnessed in Britain.[7] In 1763 *Ossian* was translated into Italian by Melchiorre Cesarotti.[8] This fact was important not only because it contributed to the diffusion of the poems in continental Europe,[9] but also because the Italian translation represented a translation of a purported translation, hence raising the question of authenticity (Stafford 1988, p.171).[10] Indeed, the concern over *Ossian*'s authenticity does not seem to have troubled European writers like Ugo Foscolo (1778-1827), who devoted his attention to the problems of translating what he called "*magnifica barbarie*":

> ...come può l'uomo nato fra popoli da gran tempo usciti dello stato eroico e sotto il beato cielo d'Italia imitare la magnifica barbarie d'Ossian e tentare di trasportarne nelle sue solitudini? Ben io volando con l'immaginazione a que' tempi guido fra le sue montagne quel cieco poeta, e siedo devoto su la sua tomba; ma io grido ad un tempo agli italiani: Lasciate quest'albero nel suo terreno poiché trapiantato tralignerà; simile a

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[7] Since the publication of *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*, in 1760, Ossianic poems had aroused debates on their authenticity. Probably the most famous among opposing arguments is Samuel Johnson's (1775), who questioned the authenticity and existence of Macpherson's sources. Johnson's argument is linear: if Macpherson really translated material that was oral in origin, and therefore perishable, liable to be forgotten or lost, how could he possibly be in possession of "... two chests more of ancient poetry", and if so, why was he refusing to show them (1951, p.106)? Since Macpherson was unable to show his original material, Johnson's opinion was that the poems "... never existed in any other form than that which we have seen" (ibid., p.107). "I look upon M'Pherson's *Fingal*" continued Johnson in his argument against *Ossian*'s authenticity, "to be as gross an imposition as ever the world was troubled with" (ibid., p.320). And as a confirmation, he suggested the fact that, since no original was accessible, one could not know whether the translation was really a translation or a forgery (ibid., p.423). However, according to Joep Leerssen (1998), *Ossian*'s authenticity cannot be a matter of true or false, black or white; it is, instead, an issue covering a blurred area where extremes like literal translation and falsification merge and change shape according to the perspective they are looked at, whether Macpherson's, his reading culture or the contemporary one (1). The issue of authenticity, adds James Porter (2001), has become a non-issue, in that the very idea of a pure folk tradition, untouched and inviolable, had ceased to exist among folklorists (400).

[8] As well as for his Ossianic translation, Melchiorre Cesarotti (1730-1808), priest, man of letters and philologist, is remembered for his Italian translation of the *Iliad*.

[9] Fiona Stafford (1988) notes that many continental readers had had access to *Ossian* through Cesarotti's translation (171).

[10] That authenticity was not a crucial point in non-British target cultures can be inferred from Mme de Staël's words (1800): "... l'ébranlement que les chants ossianiques consent à l'imagination, dispose la pensée aux méditations les plus profondes" (298). And further on the idea of *Ossian* as a stimulus for pure and noble emotions is emphasised by comparing it to literatures from southern Europe: "Les poésies d'Ossian ne sont pas plus avancées dans l'art poétique... Mais on peut toujours juger si les images de la nature, telles qu'elles sont représentées dans le midi, excitent des émotions aussi nobles et aussi pures que celles du nord..." (ibid., pp.305-306).

que' fieri animali, che dalla libertà delle selve tratti fra gli uomini, appena serbano vestigj della loro indole generosa (1803, p.60).

Foscolo was not entirely wrong in fearing the results of translating *Ossian* into Italian. Sergio Gilardino (1982) notes that Italian literary tastes at the end of the 18th century, beginning of the 19th century still adhered to a Greek-Latin canon to which *Ossian* was antithetical (61). This could be the reason why Cesarotti chose to emphasise the stylistic aspect in his translation, setting aside the source and following a rhythm that appears more solemn than the original (ibid., p.63). The dilemma that *Ossian* would have posed to Cesarotti was precisely the impossibility of expressing a sublime yet primitive poetry in a language belonging to the century "... che aborre da tutto ciò che non è ripulito, educato e magari anche un tantino incipriato" (ibid., p.70). *Ossian*'s translation could therefore enter the Italian literary system only if transformed in such a way as to reflect neoclassical ideals, which Cesarotti chose to reveal through a syntax somehow reminiscent of classical Greek sagas:

Di Tura accanto alla muraglia assiso,
Sotto una pianta di fischianti foglie
Stavasi Cucullin: lì presso, al balzo
Posava l'asta, appiè giacea lo scudo (1826, pp.6-7).

The uneasiness and at the same time interest that accompanied the Italian translation shows an emphasis on the Romantic nature of *Ossian*, which, far from nationalistic debates, could be openly manifested. Indeed, stressing the Romantic aspect of the poems, Joep Leerssen (1998) suggests viewing *Ossian*'s success in the light of its liminality, represented by an imagery where dusk, wild moors, death and the afterlife

abound, thus responding to a 19th-century imagination that required blurred settings governed by inspiration and emotionality (7-9). The influence of *Ossian* on other literatures would have been, according to Leerssen, the idea of liminality as a *topos* where inspiration could take place (10). The importance of *Ossian* would reside not so much on the reception of the poems, but on the "psychological and social forces" behind them, one of the reasons that led Macpherson to work at rescuing and celebrating Gaelic traditions (Porter 2001, p.397). Despite Ugo Foscolo's worries, these psychological forces in the end found in Italy a fertile ground for a change, contributing to an increased interest in popular traditional material.

3.1.2 The first collections: the contribution of the brothers Grimm

As mentioned before, the contribution that the brothers Grimm gave to the development of 19th-century folkloristics in England and Italy was substantial. An overview of the Grimms' approach to folklore will be therefore useful to understand the reasons behind attitudes and choices in English and Italian folkloristics.

The Grimms[11] operated in an period when the myth of the past was receiving more and more attention in various fields, from literature[12] to linguistics.[13] Such a period of cultural nationalistic influences and political upheaval determined the Grimms' direction in their works.[14] Their collection of folktales, the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (henceforth KHM), became popular at a time that saw the rise of the

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[11] Born in the German county of Hesse, Jacob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm (1786-1859) Grimm lived in an era of transition and evolution towards a united Germany, between the end of the Holy Roman Empire (1806) and the creation of the German Empire, in 1871 (Dollerup 1999, p.6).

[12] For an introductory overview of early 19th-century German literature (in English), see Robson-Scott 1965; Stahl and Yuill 1970. Eda Sagarra (1971) presents an interesting overview of German literature with an eye on the social background.

[13] For instance, a seminal linguistic figure of the time was August Schleicher (1821-1868), who developed a theory of linguistic evolution and attempted a phonological reconstruction of the original Indo-European language, introducing the linguistic genealogical tree (Brincat 1986, p.149; also Morpurgo 1996, p.237).

middle class and the process of unification of kingdoms and principalities in a German Empire (Dollerup 1999, p.59).[15] In this context the tales, with their professed antiquity, were conceived as true documents of German folk tradition and part of a German cultural heritage (ibid.).[16]

When Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published the first volume of the KHM, in 1812,[17] their main purpose was to edit a scientific work that could represent a national heritage and serve as a reference for folklorists (Cocchiara 1951, p.xi). The brothers believed in the ancient character of the tales, and were preoccupied with the idea that they could serve as a basis for their philological studies (Michaelis-Jena 1970, pp.52-53). Insisting that the stories should come with notes and an introduction, at first the brothers were not aiming to produce a book of tales for leisure reading (ibid., p.54). The intended audience of the Grimms, confirms James McGlathery (1993), was not children, [18] as the tales did not possess a directly didactic purpose (30; see also Zipes

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[14] Besides being known for the KHM, Jacob Grimm also carried out important studies in comparative linguistics and phonetics, publishing in 1819 the first volume of his *Deutsche Grammatik* (Brincat 1986, p.140; also Morpurgo 1996, p.199).

[15] On the setting in which the KHM saw the light, see also Bottigheimer 1988.

[16] Jack Zipes (1988) has attempted to frame the Grimms' concern for a genuine German folk tradition in a psychosocial context. Tracing Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's lives through hardship, work and industry, Zipes suggests that the importance the brothers gave to a national traditional heritage was part of a concern for the welfare of a Germany under French occupation and, on a personal basis, it reflected their search for stability and order in their lives (214). In this context, their idea of a pure German culture would have compensated the Grimms for the sense of loss deriving from their father's untimely death (Philipp Wilhelm Grimm died in 1796, when Jacob was 11 and Wilhelm 10) and the occupation of their homeland (ibid.)

[17] The publication of the KHM is divided into several stages. The first period, from 1807 to 1810, saw the actual collection of tales; the second period, from 1810 to 1812, involved the publication of the first edition and also the beginning of the Grimms' editing work (Dollerup 1999, pp.25-26). In 1815 a second volume appeared and in 1819 a second edition of the KHM was published (ibid., p.26). In 1825 the first printing of the *Small Edition* appeared and in 1857 the final *Complete Edition* came to print (ibid.).

[18] One has to bear in mind that until the end of the 17th century, a genre expressly for children had not been established, although its manifestations did exist, for instance in some expression of orality such as nursery rhymes, counting rhymes, and riddles (Soriano 1968, pp.331-33; see also Sale 1978, p.26). The reason seems to be in the fact that 17th-century society still revolved around an adult world (Ariès 1996 has produced a thorough analysis of childhood through the centuries), where children were considered little adults and did not possess a distinctly recognised identity of their own (Soriano 1968, p.332). Only at the end of the 18th century did changes take place (e.g. in the mother-child relation, with bourgeois mothers breastfeeding their babies) (Trumpener 1997, p.195).

1988, p.14).[19] Nevertheless, despite the Grimms' initial intention, alterations were added and the collection acquired more and more the character of a children's book.[20]

Originally, the aim Jacob and Wilhelm had in mind was clear: "our fatherland still abounds everywhere with this treasure [songs and legends] that our forefathers have transmitted to us" wrote the Grimms in a 1811 letter to Clemens Brentano; "... it is important that these items be recorded in the most exact and detailed fashion from the mouth of the informants, faithfully and truthfully, without any cosmetic touch-up or addition, and where feasible in and with their own words" (1999, p.6). "We have tried to collect these tales in as pure a form as possible" insisted the brothers in their 1812 preface. "No details have been added or embellished or changed, for we would have been reluctant to expand stories already so rich by adding analogies and allusions; they cannot be invented" (Tatar 1987, p.210). Therefore in the 1812 preface the brothers were aiming to present a corpus of stories that were remnants of an ancient and glorious German poetic tradition, to be preserved uncontaminated by literary embellishments (McGlathery 1993, pp. 29 and 32). However, their work soon proved that the intention expressed in the 1811 letter and in the 1812 preface had not been followed by deeds. The brothers chose instead to alter the tales[21] and

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[19] "It was never their [the tales] purpose to instruct", noted the brothers in their preface (1812) to the first volume of the first KHM edition, "nor were they made up for that reason..." (Tatar 1987, pp.207-8).

[20] In a letter dated 16 January 1823, Walter Scott wrote that "there is also a sort of wild fairy interest in them which makes me think them fully better adapted to awaken the imagination and soften the heart of childhood" (1934, p.312). A few years earlier, in 1819, F. Cohen had written that "the most important addition to *nursery* literature has been effected in Germany, by the diligence of John and William Grimm, two antiquarian brethren of the highest reputation" (95; emphasis added).

[21] Bellosi and Savini (1980) point out that in 19th-century collections of tales, alterations and editing were often present. Collectors felt entitled to do so because the genre they worked with was not a formalised one (161).

created hybrid texts that contained motifs taken from different versions, producing material that has been defined as "fakelore"[22] (Dundes 1986, p.260).[23]

Over fifty years of editions, the tales underwent a shift in nature, from samples of oral tradition to stories to be read (Michaelis-Jena 1971, p.266).[24] Structurally, the Grimms added new episodes and changed the order of elements (Dollerup 1999, p.47). Stylistically and sequentially, the tales were made clearer and smoother (Zipes 1988, p.12). Linguistically, idioms, proverbs and repetitions were introduced, spelling was updated, descriptions were expanded and sensitive material deleted or modified (Dollerup 1999, p.48).[25]

In a controversial discussion on the editorial contribution in the KHM, John Ellis (1983) maintains that the Grimms, although presenting their work as a scientific and faithful collection of national folklore, fraudulently manipulated their material, misrepresenting reality and deceiving their readership (6). Stressing words like "fraudulent" (ibid., p.6), "at will" (96), and "lie" (71; 96; 97), Ellis underlines the fact that the brothers were aware of their manipulation, as changes in the subsequent editions are too great for the Grimms to have been unaware of them, and that therefore they deliberately lied to their public (ibid., p.71). Jack Zipes (1986),

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[22] The term "fakelore" was coined by Richard Dorson in 1950 to indicate the presentation of recast or newly fabricated material as genuine folklore collected on-site (Dundes 1985, p.5).

[23] According to Alan Dundes, the reason for the creation of this fakelore would lie in the need to invest in a national tradition, due to a sort of inferiority complex suffered by the country (1985, p.11). Fakelore would then fill a specific need, that of asserting one's national identity "... and to instil pride in that identity" (ibid., p.13). It must also be added that the reception of the first edition was rather cool, and that stories were found "boring and shapeless" (Michaelis-Jena 1971, p.266). Criticism was directed towards the presence of the preface and appendix, as well as towards the lack of illustrations (Michaelis-Jena 1970, p.55). Furthermore, the tales were considered unsuitable for children, as "... readers found them too stark..." (ibid., p.167). From these considerations, the Grimms' attempt to present the tales under a philological light seems to have been unsuccessful. The two brothers "... were born into an age which considered tales silly, even dangerous superstition" explains Ruth Michaelis-Jena (1971), "suitable for old women and the nursery" (265).

[24] This elaboration would have had the consequence of creating the "book tale" (*Büchmärchen*), whose function was to fill the gap left by the disappearance of the oral tale (Lüthi 1992, p.137). Brian Alderson (1993) however notes that the Grimms never completely abandoned the storyteller's presence, and tried to catch, through the written word, something of the vigour and directness of the oral tale (61).

[25] However, in the 1812 edition the Grimms pointed out that alterations applied only to the content, and not to the linguistic aspect of the tales (Neumann 1993, p.27).

however, disagrees and affirms that "there is no evidence to indicate that the Grimms consciously sought to dupe German readers and feed them lies about the German past..." (273). Indeed, in the preface to the second edition (1819), the Grimms had stated that "... in this new edition, we have carefully eliminated every phrase not appropriate for children", aiming to produce a book that was also "a manual of manners" (Tatar 1987, p.217).[26] "The first volume" continued the brothers in their preface, "has been *almost completely reworked*; fragments have been completed, many stories have been told more directly and simply, and there are very few tales that do not appear in an improved form" (ibid., p.220; emphasis added).

In the editions following that of 1812, the Grimms apparently took a different stance, asserting that the authenticity of their tales was to be found in their content, not in their expression (Ellis 1983, p.17). Hence, the process of elaboration and rewriting that the Grimms carried out would have "... totally destroyed the style and flavor of the original, the resulting tone being the creation of the brothers themselves" (ibid., p.70). Interventions involved both the form and the content of the tales, for instance by expanding the tales and purging them of disturbing elements such as successful crime, violence,[27] incest, explicit sexuality[28] (ibid., p.91). However, Cay Dollerup (1999) stresses the fact that the Grimms, in particular Wilhelm, were open about their

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[26] "The Grimms were not merely collectors" explains Jack Zipes (1988), and they successfully established "... an ideal type for the *literary* fairy tale, one that sought to be as close to the oral tradition as possible, while incorporating stylistic, formal, and substantial thematic changes to appeal to a growing bourgeois audience" (12).

[27] Although Maria Tatar (1987) seems to disagree and suggests that the two brothers actually added or intensified violence (5). For instance, the second edition of Cinderella contains an episode in which the stepsisters are finally punished by two doves pecking out their eyes, a description that would not appear in the first version of the story (ibid., pp.5-6).

[28] More than violence, Tatar sees the Grimms' expurgation of the stories as directed to sexuality and premarital pregnancy (as in the original story of Rapunzel), a subject that would have made the brothers uncomfortable (1987, p.7).

editorial intervention and acknowledged them in the 1819 edition, giving more information on additions and improvements in the final 1857 edition (26).[29]

Another criticism directed at the brothers is the fact that they obtained their material not from the *Volk*, but from middle-class literate friends (Ellis 1983, pp.26-27). This is confirmed by Jack Zipes (1988), who explains how the brothers did not visit peasants in order to collect their tales, but had friends coming to their house to tell the stories (10).[30] This would imply that the stories collected by the Grimms, having ceased to play a vital role in adult daily lives, would have reached the brothers in already revised versions, "cleansed" of brutal or explicit language (Tatar 1987, p.24). In addition, the brothers themselves, by their very presence, could have influenced the rendition of the stories, as most probably their female informants adopted a different stance or modified the language of their stories in front of two young bachelors (ibid., p.25). "It is hard to believe...", says Tatar, that informant Dorothea Viehmann kept unaltered her narrative style "... whether she was rehearsing her repertory for the Grimms or telling a tale to her grandchildren" (ibid., p.26).

It is however important to note that the Grimms were concerned with fidelity to oral tradition. "The pioneering deed of the young Grimms at the beginning of the nineteenth century" affirms Ines Köhler-Zülch (1993), "was to successfully fend off resistance and *assert folk traditions as a serious object of research...*" (42; emphasis

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[29] The brothers, as Jack Zipes (1983) puts it, "... contributed to the literary 'bourgeoisification' of oral tales", but they did so without intention "... to betray the heritage of the common people in Germany" (47). It could not have been so, given the fact that the Grimms themselves had so clearly expressed their intention to contribute to the preservation of German cultural tradition (ibid.). One of the reasons for this "bourgeoisification", suggests Zipes, lies in the Grimms' readership, whose morality was becoming more prudish and required therefore careful censorship of those passages that could offend adult readers and be considered harmful for children (ibid., p.48). As far as the KHM are concerned, explains Zipes, "... we are certainly dealing with a case of 'bourgeois appropriation'..." (1988, p.19). Maria Tatar (1987) agrees on this point and explains that the first edition of the KHM would have "... missed its potential market because the brothers had let their scholarly ambitions undermine the production of a book for children" (16). In the second edition, continues Tatar, the Grimms on the contrary underlined the pedagogical value of the tales and admitted having removed passages that would not be appropriate for childhood (19). The question of expurgation thus is far more complex.

added). The fact that in later editions of the KHM the brothers did exactly what they preached against finds its reasons in several external factors. Linda Dégh (1988) for instance points out that, if the brothers had been altering their texts, it is also true that a more objective approach to storytelling and orality did not take place before the 1940s and that previously there was no clear-cut difference between narrators and tale writers, because stories were considered common property available for anyone to recast (69-70). This is also the thesis held by Donald Ward (1988), who remarks how the Grimms were working at a time when recording devices and shorthand notation were not available, a fact that partially explains why the brothers produced fragmentary notes that were later expanded with other material (95). One could indeed argue that the Grimms did not follow a scientific method simply because there was no folklore science established at the time. In addition, folklorists would reword their material, simply because there was no emphasis on orality. Ellis, says Ward, is "apparently unaware that the academic world had yet to develop any methods in these areas at that time" (1988, pp.95-96). Yet, if the academic world had not developed a method for folklore research, the brothers Grimm can be seen as having somehow smoothed the way, as their fame reached and influenced folklore methods in England and Italy.

In England, the influence of the Grimms is detectable in the early stages of the English interest in traditional material. This influence can be seen in the fact that their work or their names are quoted in many introductions to English folklore collections as a warrant of the validity and importance of collecting such material. For instance, antiquarian and folklorist Thomas Keightley (1789-1872) introduced his collection of tales by pointing out how "Dr. Jacob Grimm – perhaps the first

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[30] However, Siegfried Neumann (1993) believes that the fact that the brothers collected tales mostly among educated people does not automatically mean that the stories reflected the traditions of those social classes (31).

authority on these matters in Europe" had written Keightley a letter stating that "... even to him it [the collection] offered something new..." (1828/1850, p.v). Similarly, in his edition of *Anecdotes and Traditions* (1839) William J. Thoms[31] noted he had been assured that Jacob Grimm, "the learned author of the *Deutsche Mythologie*"[32] would regard some of the material collected "as of the first importance in deciding a point very essential to a right knowledge of that subject" (vii). A few years later, in his 1846 letter to the *Athenaeum*,[33] Thoms advocated the venue of a British Grimm, "... who shall do for the Mythology of the British Islands the good service which that profound antiquary and philologist has accomplished for the Mythology of Germany" (1999, p.11).

As far as Italy is concerned, attention needs to be drawn to an element that appears in the work of the Grimms and re-emerged, more than fifty years later, in the work of Giuseppe Pitré. A concern of the brothers was the nature of their informants.[34] In particular, emphasis was given to Dorothea Viehmann (1755-1815), probably the most famous of the Grimms' informants. The daughter of a village inn-keeper, she is

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[31] William John Thoms (1803-1885), antiquarian and deputy librarian at the House of Lords from 1863 to 1882, became personally involved in the formation of the Folklore Society (Nicolaisen 1995, p.71). One of the leading figures of British antiquarianism, according to Gillian Bennett (1996) Thoms was interested in collecting that "popular literature" which represented the heritage of his "old country", the remains of a "Merrie England" to be preserved for future generations (212), much like the Grimms had already done in Germany. W. Nicolaisen (1995) sees in Thoms an antiquarian inclination which led him towards the past in order to "glean" whatever remained of ancient tradition (72). On the contrary, R. Troy Boyer (1997) suggests that Thoms was actually looking for material still current in oral tradition, thus moving away from the antiquarian approach (56). According to Boyer, Nicolaisen's view of Thoms as a gleaner is influenced by anti-historical positions which do not allow to view Thoms from the perspective of continuity between past and present, tradition and innovation (ibid., pp.59-60). Boyer concludes that Thoms's approach is not antiquarian, but historical and comparative (ibid., p.60).

[32] The *Deutsche Mythologie* is often quoted in Thoms's footnotes as a source or reference.

[33] The letter, which Thoms signed "Ambrose Merton", introduced the word "folklore" for the first time (see also chapter 6, section 6.1.1).

[34] The Grimms' collection has been criticised for the credibility of their sources. The brothers would have given the impression that their sources were genuinely peasant and German, as well as faithfully represented, stressing a word-for-word transmission (Ellis 1983, pp.13-15). Stating that "folklore tends to be more strongly retained by members of certain occupations such as shepherds, fishermen, and miners", and that "it is therefore preferable to question these individuals as well as old people, women and children whose memories of transmitted folklore are fresh" (1999, p.7), the brothers would have suggested that their tales were collected straight from the mouth of the *Volk* and that their sources were genuinely peasant. John Ellis (1983) however disagrees with this picture and points out

described as having a "... pleasant face with bright, clear eyes", and her narrative style possesses "... an unusually lively manner" (Tatar 1987, p.212). "At first, she speaks spontaneously" continues her description, "then, if one asks, she repeats what she has said slowly...; when she retells something, she never changes its substance and corrects an error as soon as she notices it, even if it means interrupting herself" (ibid.). One cannot avoid making a parallel with the description that Pitré made years later of his own favourite storyteller, Agatuzza Messia:

> Chi legge non trova che la fredda, la nuda parola; ma la narrazione della Messia più che nella parola consiste nel muovere irrequieto degli occhi, nell'agitar delle braccia, negli atteggiamenti della persona tutta, che si alza, gira intorno per la stanza, s'inchina, si solleva, facendo la voce ora piana, ora concitata, ora paurosa, ora dolce, ora stridula, ritraente la voce de' personaggi e l'atto che essi compiono (Pitré 1875, p.xix).

It is a description that, although not explicitly, shows many similarities with the approach followed the Grimms. Viehmann possesses "unusually lively manners"; Messia has a "muovere irrequieto degli occhi". The two women's description does not linger much on their physical aspect; it highlights their verbal and nonverbal features, their storytelling skills, making Viehmann a predecessor of Messia and showing the Grimms' influence on Pitré's approach to collecting oral material.

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that, except in the case of informant Dorothea Viehmann, the two brothers gave little information about their informants (26).

3.2. ENGLISH FOLKLORE

3.2.1. From antiquarianism to evolutionism

As mentioned above, the work of the Grimms had a particular influence on the first steps of English folklore research, when popular material became the focus of interest of antiquarians. Antiquarianism contributed to the assumption that folklore material was cut off from the world in which collectors operated, and that one of its key components, namely orality, was disappearing (Vincent 1982, p.23).[35] Commenting on his collection of popular tales,[36] Thomas Keightley remarked that "the legends will probably fade fast away from the popular memory; it is not likely that any one will relate those which I have given over again; and it therefore seems more probable that this volume may in future be reprinted with notes and additions" (1850, p.viii). Such material did not have a value of its own;[37] it was valuable to the extent that it bore proof of a national heritage: "of what importance an apparently trifling fact may become - in illustration of the source of National Mythology… - or by comparison with cognate Traditions - all who have studied such subjects will readily admit" (Thoms 1839, p.vii). And "remains" is the word used by R. H.

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[35] Roger Abrahams (1993) suggests that the study of antiquities was also a means for antiquarians to gain social and political prestige by identifying "remnants" endowed with a certain mystery and power (3).

[36] Gathered from written sources - the British Museum (Keightley 1850, p.viii).

[37] This stresses the above discussed potential division between folklore and literature. William J. Thoms appears to make a clear distinction between the two, stating that "Popular Literature... is more a Lore than a Literature" (1999, p.11). However, this is a terminology that seems to carry ideological connotations, as Joseph Jacobs shows when he remarks that a story handed down orally is called "folklore", whereas when it is written down it acquires the definition of "literature" (1893, p.237). The question appears controversial. John Nicholson (1890) for instance seemed to discard the idea of ascribing oral material a literary character and preferred to take an evolutionist stance (he compares traditional material to a "crawling worm", from which the butterfly of the present times was born), affirming that customs and beliefs need preservation, because they risk disappearing as a result of progress (xi). However, William Halliday stated that the study of European folktales is indeed a study in literary history, because folk literature and folk songs were the remains of the literature that was created by previous generations (1924, p.x). Countess Evelyn Martinengo-Cesaresco remarked that tales and songs were not only meant to entertain "uneducated" people, but are also interesting for "... all who care at all for literature" and explained that "the Folk-tale is the father of all fiction, and the Folk-song is the mother of all poetry" (1886, p.xi).

Cromek (1810) for a collection of Nithsdale and Galloway songs and ballads of which he welcomed the publication because "such [old ballads] especially as have never before been published, and are floating in the breath of popular tradition" (ii). The distance, partly real and partly "encouraged",[38] between the traditional and the modern world helped view popular material in a light of nostalgia: "they [the ballads] were never printed before, and are ripe in the sentiments and feelings of their forefathers…" (ibid., p.xxvi). And, in fact, towards the 1850s "the oral", says Penny Fielding (1996), "was joining the pastoral in a sentimentalized past where it could more safely be contained" (41-42).

In 1859 Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species*, and his theories[39] influenced Edward B. Tylor's evolutionist notion of progress as a non-reversible process, which introduced the idea of "survival" to explain the presence of elements seen as inconsistencies in the development of a culture (1871, p.70). If a civilisation had progressed to a high degree of cultured life, it would not, unless exceptional circumstances occurred, fall back to its original state (ibid., p.27). There was however the problematic as well as undoubted presence of elements that did not meet the criteria established for the evaluation of progress;[40] these elements, among which Tylor included traditional sayings, proverbs and riddles, were explained as "permanence of culture", elements of a custom that once had a meaning of its own but that with time had lost their original sense, keeping only formal aspects (ibid.,

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[38] Although admitting the decline of oral traditions in the 19th century, David Vincent (1982) wishes to suggest that it was a transformation rather than a "death": "the composition of folk-song was not killed by the industrial revolution, it was displaced from the farms to the factories and mines where it flourished as an expression of the economic and political struggles of the new workforce" (40).

[39] Darwinian theories, polemically argues Carlo Tullio-Altan (1983), somehow became an answer to the need to legitimise the superiority of European culture over other forms of civilisation, and to find a necessary justification for the growth of colonialism (42).

[40] Evaluated in terms of the following criteria: development of industry and agriculture, scientific knowledge, presence of moral principles, religious belief, as well as social and political organisation (Tylor 1871, pp.26-27).

p.70).[41] During the last decades of the 19th century, the members of the Folklore Society[42] applied the concepts of evolutionary anthropology[43] to folklore, thus adopting the idea of "remains" and seeing these elements as clues of early stages of mankind (Dorson 1961, p.306).

Gillian Bennett (1993) underlines the evolutionist parallel between anthropology and cultural traditions, by noting that as fossils could be retrieved in the present natural environment, so cultural traditions (the items,[44] the "fossils" of an earlier period of human development in Tylorian theories) could be found in the present cultural environment (87). In this way, one would have been able to reconstruct the history of human development from prehistoric man "to Victorian Gentleman" (ibid.). Andrew Lang in *Custom and Myth* (1893) stated that folklore is a form of study in which relics of old races are collected, and defined these "relics" as "... ideas which are in our time but not of it" (11).[45] An evolutionist approach can also be recognised in the definition of folklore by folklorist Charlotte Burne (1850-1923), who saw the discipline as an "... expression of the psychology of early man", an umbrella term that grouped various manifestations of traditions "... current among backward peoples, or retained by the uncultured classes of more advanced peoples" (1914, p.1). Burne's view of folklore conceived of it as the product of a savage or uncivilised society which, in its evolution, had left behind some relics of its unrecorded past

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[41] Proverbs for instance had a recognised importance for the education of peasants in Medieval Europe, but since society had undergone a change from the Middle Ages to the Industrial era, proverbs had lost their educational function and remained merely as traces of ancestral wisdom (Tylor 1871, p.90).

[42] Gillian Bennett (1996) suggests that the Folklore Society was a closed circle where power positions were held by evolutionists who could influence, also through publications, the approach to folklore (213).

[43] On evolutionism and its effects in Victorian society, see also Stocking 1987.

[44] By using the word items I am pointing at the tendency to consider traditional material as collectible material to be stored in museums and books in order to preserve it from oblivion. Joseph Jacobs comments that "books are so many telephones preserving the lore of the Folk, or more often burying it and embalming it" (1893, p.237). On this topic, see also chapter 6, section 6.1.2.

[45] Giuseppe Cocchiara (1952) notes how these "relics" can be seen as motionless facts among a people in evolution (412). This would therefore represent a contradiction, since evolutionism is indeed based on the evolution from the "savage" to the "civilised".

(ibid., p.2). This perspective shows the successful "marriage" between the Darwinian theory of the evolution of species and their Tylorian counterpart in folklore, a marriage that would reflect its approach in the way folklore was translated onto the page.

3.2.2. English folklore onto the page

In discussing Thomas Percy's *Reliques*, George L. Kittredge notes that the collection proved to be very useful to Francis Child's work, but it also revealed "... the full enormity of Bishop Percy's sins against popular tradition" (Child 1965, p.xxvii). Kittredge is referring to the fact of "improving" ballads for the written page, a practice that Child abhorred and had tried, at least theoretically, to avoid.[46] Percy's method and Kittredge's criticism may be taken as an example of the different approaches adopted in translating 19th-century folklore onto the page.

19th-century English folklore collections reveal a variety of perspectives revolving around questions that span from verbatim reproduction to different degrees of editing. For instance, Walter Scott suggested an approach that aimed to record ballads adhering as much as possible to the material collected, as he stated that "no liberties have been taken, either with the recited or written copies of these ballads" (1806, p.cxxiii). Nevertheless, in the next few lines, Scott also clarified that some corrections were made in order to remove discrepancies[47] caused by orality, and to give ballads a poetic form (ibid.).[48] In addition, the readership had an influence on

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[46] Nick Groom (1999) justifies Percy's attitude by pointing out that the ballads collected were mainly anonymous and presented different versions, and that therefore any trace of authorship had disappeared through years of retelling and rewriting (9). This is an interesting suggestion, as it points at some sort of interrogation about the sources of folklore material and indicates that Percy's interventions were dictated by a belief that the material was coming from a collective and anonymous "folk".

[47] Substitutions and deletions, for instance.

[48] Walter Scott's attitude towards ballads is rather complex. On the one hand, he stated that "the reader must not expect to find, in the border ballads, refined sentiment, and, far less, elegant expression" (1806, p.cxv). However, in James Hogg's account of Scott's visit to the Hoggs (1834), it

interventions; ballads were made "fit for the press", and changes were welcomed when they could "remove obvious corruptions" (ibid., p.cxxiv). Nevertheless, later on it is stated that "the utmost care has been taken, never to reject a word or phrase. used by a reciter, however uncouth or antiquated" (ibid., p.cxxviii). At this point one could easily suspect inconsistency in Scott's approach to ballads, as he seemed to assert the necessity to make arrangements to "improve" material, while at the same time claiming loyalty to it. However, Richard Dorson (1968) explains Scott's attitude by making a distinction between the introduction to the *Minstrelsy* and the actual collection. While making changes in the material collected, Scott would have revealed an intention to follow folk traditions strictly, as expressed in the introduction and notes to his work (110). Nevertheless, one has the impression that the care put in the explanatory notes carries Scott's intention beyond the introduction. For instance, in the following lines, from the ballad *Sir Patrick Spens*, footnotes have been added in order to explain some feature of orality and language that would otherwise go unnoticed:

The king sits in Dumfermline town,
Drinking the blude-red wine;
"O* whare will I get a skeely skipper,†
"To sail this new ship of mine?"

* In singing, the interjection, O, is added to the second and fourth lines.

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emerges that Scott was treating the ballads as if they were poems to be recited (1909, p.59). Hogg reported how Scott had taken down some ballads from Hogg's mother chanting, and how the latter had remarked that "they [the ballads] were made for singin' an' no for readin'; but ye hae broken the charm noo, an' they'll never sung mair" (ibid., p.53). Margaret Laidlaw's pessimistic view of Scott's activity represents above all the purported separation of oral and written, of popular and literate that the 19th century was trying to achieve (Vincent 1982, p.21). As Penny Fielding (1996) remarks, Scott's editing work was not simply an "improvement" of single ballads, it also represented the "refinement of orality itself" (46).

† *Skeely skipper* – Skilful mariner.

(1806, lines 1-4, p. 7)

It is an approach which appears far from acknowledging the individuality enclosed in the oral elements of a narration; yet it also dissociates itself from a total rewriting, in that it reveals an awareness of the presence of oral features and considers these features as worthy of being quoted.

Walter Scott's attitude is not unusual. It is quite common to read introductions to collections advocating a verbatim reproduction of the material collected, to realise that the material in question has actually been through some sort of editing process. Nevertheless, editorial interventions can also be openly admitted.[49] John Roby (1829) maintained that popular traditions, viewed as relics of the past, must be presented to the reader "... in a form that may be generally acceptable, divested of the dust and dross in which the originals are but too often disfigured, so as to appear worthless and uninviting" (1872, p.xvi). Later on, Roby reasserted the necessity of intervening in traditional material, as to obtain "tales of romantic interest" through imaginative and creative processes (1854, p.22). Similarly, Thomas Thiselton-Dyer (1876) opted for a rearrangement of material, in order to give it "... a readable and condensed form" for the public. The need for readability would thus reassert the belief in the anonymous and collective origin of oral material.

On the contrary, William Allingham (1864) acknowledged the effects of oral transmission on ballads (alterations, different versions, adaptations), but he was also

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[49] A fact that is not exclusive to late-19th-century study of folklore. In his *Observations on Popular Antiquities*, John Brand (1777) admitted having omitted material, in particular corrupted customs that were originally good, but that with time lost their original purity, "... the true Meaning and Design of them, being either lost, or very much in the Dark through Folly and Superstition" (1810, p.xix). David Herd (1776) made clear that his collection of Scottish songs was not intended as material for antiquarians, but rather for "the amusement of the public at large" (1973:xii). Therefore, he openly admitted not having tried to follow the original orthography of the songs, as this was not necessary for his purpose (ibid.).

aware that several changes had been brought about by editorial interventions (vi). Alterations, he explained, come naturally after handing the ballads down for generations, through which they acquire a form that is more suitable to be read than heard (ibid., p.viii). However, it is with editors that major alterations take place, probably because their work is quick and "despotic", if compared to the natural and gradual shifts of oral transmission (ibid.). In an interesting and witty passage, Allingham tried to describe the life of narrative songs, from their popular origin to their transmission to singers and reciters, to "the baskets of literary collectors", from which they go into "... the editorial laboratories, there sifted, mixed, shaken, clarified, improved (or the contrary)... and sent at last into the World of Books in a properly solemn shape, their triviality duly weighted with a load of antiquarianism, and garnished with fit apologies for the presentation of such 'barbarous productions' to 'a polished age like the present'" (ibid., p.x).

Allingham's concern does not appear to have been shared by the Folklore Society. In editing Georgina Jackson's collected material from Shropshire, Charlotte Burne (1883) claimed for herself the responsibility of making alterations and confessed having related customs with a simple and colloquial language, omitting dialect (ix). It may appear strange that a member of the Folklore Society decided to intervene in the dialect of the narrator. Two reasons can be given for this. One is that the Folklore Society was mainly interested in preserving customs and traditions, but seems not to have paid much attention to the way this material was related. Charlotte Burne, president of the Society in 1909-10, outspokenly maintained that the word folklore "... excludes, by implication, not only early arts and industries... but *language*, physical anthropology and the material side of archaeology..." (1906, p.233; emphasis added). In a later presidential address, the concept was reasserted: "For what *is* Folklore?... It is *the learning of the people*, the traditional lore of the folk... It

is not folk-speech" (1911, p.16; emphasis as in original). The second reason for avoiding vernacular in presenting Shropshire folklore material is explicitly given by Burne herself; quoting dialect features would have meant risking annoying the reader with continuous interruptions that might not interest the public (1883, p.ix). Indeed, Burne gave a third reason and honestly admitted believing that her ability to translate a dialect was not sufficient (ibid.). Burne seemed to worry about producing a tiresome text, as she justified in this way her editorial intervention in the selection of versions and in the omission of narrators' names (ibid., p.x). Also, legends and stories are retold along with notes and commentaries,[50] which Burne deemed necessary in order to make the book accessible to those readers who, although interested in the subject, did not have much knowledge of folklore (ibid.). There seems therefore to be no acknowledgement in Burne of a possible individuality in folklore expressed through the use of oral features (which are indeed left out).

Joseph Jacobs (1898) followed a similar approach, although for different reasons. Viewing as utopian the idea of writing down every single word uttered, Jacobs plainly admitted having made alterations to the fairy tales he collected, for instance adding or deleting material, writing a conclusion to an unfinished story, prosing ballads and eliminating vernacular words when they were too abundant (1968, p.144). The reason, he explained, is that his purpose was not to provide science with useful material, but rather to entertain children (ibid.). Pretending to answer criticism from folklorists, Jacobs suggested that criticism should not be based on more famous collections like the Grimms' in Germany or Asbjörnsen's in Norway, because "... they did the same as I" (ibid., p.145).

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[50] Sometimes, the dialect version is given, especially in proverbs: "He's al'ays i'the lane when he ought to be i' the leasow" (Burne 1883, p.589), is followed by an explanation, the place of origin and a note on one of two terms: "leasow = meadow" (ibid.).

The issue of oral features appears therefore almost a non-issue in 19th-century English folklore collections. Fletcher Moss (1898) maintained that "to learn a tale it [sic] is often to tell a tale" (ix). However in his collection there is no mention of language, nonverbal features, or individual narrators, and Moss concentrated on describing customs and traditions in his own words. Alfred Williams's position is even more peculiar. In writing the preface to Williams's collection of folk songs, Stewart Sanderson (1923) notes that Williams intervened by omitting or bowdlerising songs (viii). Furthermore, Sanderson continues, Williams paradoxically did not try to record the tunes of the songs, although he was aware that words and melodies cannot be separated (ibid.). Nevertheless, Williams seemed to acknowledge the importance of what he omitted, as he explained that singers could not recite the songs, they could only sing them (ibid., p.19). But one of the most pioneering aspects of his introduction is a brief paragraph on his informants (ibid.). In this paragraph, Williams described personalities, attitudes, and tone of voice, somehow suggesting that if songs cannot live without their music, they equally cannot remain anonymous. Several conclusions can be drawn from the presentation of these perspectives. The presence of different points of view reveals that, in a period where tape-recorders, video-recorders or any device for action replay had yet to come to collectors' aid, an awareness of the complexity of orality was already present, generally dealt with in introductions and notes to collections. When Charlotte Burne discussed the problems of vernacular, or when Joseph Jacobs admitted having made alterations, they were implicitly acknowledging that some of the features they witnessed in gathering stories were left out through a decision-making process. It is, for instance, Burne's own decision to leave out vernacular because it was considered tiresome and not pertaining to the study of folklore, and it is Jacobs's own decision to alter his tales in order to reach his goal, i.e. to produce a book for children. This possibility of making

choices in folklore methods suggests in turn the existence (however veiled or embryonic) of the idea that to take some oral material and put it into a written form actually means to translate it, and to do it according to specific choices. As noted in chapter 1 (section 1.2.3.), one of the definitions of translation sees it as a decision-making process. Deciding what to retain, what to emphasise, what to change and what to leave out in the passage from oral to written represents, in other words, the same process taking place when translating from one language to another. Though it is true that none of the scholars here mentioned calls this operation a translation, it is nevertheless an operation involving a mechanism that has been recognised as determining a translation process. Finally, in the above discussed approaches there is an awareness that the oral contains more than words, that the role of nonverbal features becomes more visible once these elements are removed. When William Allingham argued against the work of literary collectors, giving ballads a "solemn shape" fit for publishing, he was actually showing that the tongue ever turns to the aching tooth, implicitly remarking the loss of features that characterised the oral version. And a consequence of this idea is that attention starts to be shifted from "folk" to "informants", i.e. to individuals performing their material. 19th-century folklore is seen as the product of a collectivity; nevertheless, the very act of gathering oral material casts a light on a complexity that can only come from the artistry of single individuals. English folklore shows a trace of this complexity, but it is with Italian folklore that the passage from collectivity to individuality will acquire more visibility.

3.3. ITALIAN FOLKLORE

3.3.1. The development of Italian folkloristics

Various terms, among which *demopsicologia*, *demologia*, and *laografia*, have characterised the development of folklore investigations in Italy (Toschi 1960, p.9). Among these, "folklore" seems to have had the greatest diffusion, although, together with its derivative terms (*studi folklorici*, *folklorista*, *folclore*), it prevailed particularly in the second half of the 19th century (ibid., p.7). Though it was during the last decades of the 19th century that folkloristics reached its maturity, when an increased attention to the study and classification of Italian dialects[51] merged with a more systematic approach to collecting oral material, Ceserani and De Federicis (1986) actually identify three periods:

1) A pre-*Risorgimento* phase up to 1848,[52] further divided in two branches: a) the collection of documents and testimonies of popular traditions, which included reports and statistics carried out during the Napoleonic period, and b) the gathering of folklore material, following the Romantic excitement for the "spontaneity" of the "*popolo*" (119-20). This however did not lead to a systematic work of folktale classification. As a matter of fact, according to Italo Calvino (1993) an exhaustive collection of Italian folktales never saw the light in that period (ix-x). Ceserani and De Federicis suggest that, at least up to 1830, collections were scanty and inconsistent (1986, p.120).[53]

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[51] The study of dialects had begun well before the unification of Italy. Carlo Cattaneo for instance dealt with dialect studies in the early 1840s, when he developed the already existing theory of ethnic substratum, i.e. the idea that a language may have absorbed elements of the language it had replaced in a given area (Brincat 1986, pp.181-82).

[52] The first phase, according to Cirese (1958), began after the first decade of the 19th century, later than other European nations such as Germany and Great Britain (9).

[53] One of the first attempts, in 1811, to evaluate popular songs and poems was by scholar Basilio Amati, whose assessment of texts collected contrasted with other documents of the period in that he treated folklore with caution but not with the contempt that had characterised his contemporaries (Cirese 1958, p.10).

2) A phase developing along with the unification of Italy and ending around 1870, during which research acquired a more definite historical and philological character: comparative approaches to oral material started during this phase and were fully developed in the third period (Ceserani and De Federicis 1986, p.120).

3) A final phase covering the last decades of the century, where the interest in folklore was influenced by recent European theories of comparative mythology[54] and evolution[55] (Ceserani and De Federicis, p.121). This was the theoretical background behind the work of Giuseppe Pitré, who expanded his research to usages, customs and objects of popular culture (ibid.).

As discussed in chapter 2, section 2.2.4., Giovanni Berchet was among the first Italian men of letters to acknowledge the fact that the products of the "*popolo*" had an oral character and were passed on not through books, but through narrators: "quando viene l'uomo letterato e se le fa ripetere, e le ferma in caratteri scritti, chi può dire per quante bocche sieno già passate quelle cantilene?" (1912, p.112). As early as 1816, Berchet introduced the notion of *poesia popolare* in his *Lettera semiseria*: "tutti gli uomini, da Adamo in giù fino al calzolaio che ti fa i begli stivali, hanno nel fondo dell'anima una tendenza alla poesia" (1912, p.14). However, as noted, here he seems to have been influenced by an restricted notion of "*popolo*", as he referred to popular poetry as a poetry for the "*popolo*" and not by the "*popolo*" (Cocchiara 1959, p.142). Benedetto Croce (1933) objected to this way of seeing the "*popolo*" and suggested that Berchet's definition would be an entity in between *plebe* and intellectual aristocracy, also noting that Berchet's concept of *poesia popolare* would end up acquiring the paradoxically opposite meaning of educational poetry for

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[54] In particular, the influence of philologist Friedrich Max Müller is visible in Angelo De Gubernatis work *Storia delle novelline popolari* (1883), in which De Gubernatis supports the universal and mythological origin of various folktales (2).

[55] With reference to the influence that E. B. Tylor's evolutionary theories had on 19th-century British folkloristics, an influence that had repercussions also on late 19th-century Italian folklorists.

the "*popolo*" (29). At the beginning of the century, the attitude towards folklore was still influenced by the debate that opposed Classicism to Romanticism, and Berchet's *manifesto* was a product of the ideas that circulated. Despite the fact that in his 1837 *Vecchie romanze spagnuole* Berchet had modified his perspective,[56] according to Giuseppe Cocchiara (1959) he never completely abandoned his classical mentality and, as a consequence, in his translations[57] there seems to be an abundance of archaisms, elaborate passages and complex structures that contrasts with the spontaneity and directness of *poesia popolare* (150-51). While the Castilian *romances* are rich in colour and tone, the translation appears to be somewhat monotonous (ibid., p.152). Cocchiara exemplifies this by commenting on the first three quatrains of the poem *Il canto del marinaro*, the first of which is reproduced here:

Oh, chi avesse tal ventura

lungo l'acque alla marina,

come l'ebbe il conte Arnaldo

il San Gianni di mattina! (Berchet 1912, p.119)

The Spanish version:

¡Quién hubiese tal ventura

sobre las aguas del mar

como hubo el conde Arnaldos

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[56] In his preface to the *Romanze*, Berchet revealed his intention of keeping the intonation and harmony of the ST (1912, p.116). Furthermore, since the verses require a childlike attitude, he advised his readers to leave aside their knowledge and to read the verses with their hearts rather than with their minds: "... sappi che a voler godere di queste tenui poesie, bisogna che tu ti rifaccia, per così dire, pusillo, che tu dismetta le reminiscenze sapienti e lasci andare il tuo cuore alle impressioni, senza darti ad analizzarle più che tanto" (ibid., p.117).

[57] In this case the translation also involves a passage from one language (Spanish) to another (Italian).

la mañana de San Juan![58]

Cocchiara underlines the simplicity that the expression *sobre las aguas del mar* has, in contrast with the much more literary *lungo l'acque alla marina*, and concludes that it is hardly possible to imagine an Italian peasant woman performing Berchet's translation, whereas the original text conveys the freshness that was expected from an oral tradition product (1959, p.154). Berchet as a folklorist is then widely present in the preface to the *Vecchie romanze*, while the translations would still be under the influence of the *Lettera semiseria* (ibid., p.155).[59] Berchet's editing interventions would thus prevent the "voice of the *popolo*" from being heard in its entirety in the *Romanze*. His position within folklore research is therefore peculiar, in that it does not openly acknowledge any individual feature, yet his reworking of the poems does not place much emphasis on the idea of "*popolo*" either.

While Berchet had not been able to abandon entirely the idea of a poetry for the "*popolo*" and not by the "*popolo*", in Niccolò Tommaseo's collection of *Canti popolari toscani, corsi, illirici, greci* one starts to recognise a change in attitude, as Tommaseo added explanatory notes and comments to songs and poems, thus bringing the reader towards the original material rather than the other way round:

Quegli occhi neri quanto ben gli stanno

Che paion due coralli[1] pien'[2] d'amore!

Quando tu gli alzi, innamorar mi fanno,

Quando gli abbassi, mi cavano il core.

Quando gli abbassi...

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[58] Online text, http://faculty.washington.edu/petersen/321/arnaldos.htm

[59] However, it is exactly in the preface that one can find those approaches to folklore that late 19th-century folklorists adopted. For instance, Berchet is aware that a written song loses part of its charms because musicality cannot be entirely translated and advises readers to apply some sort of melody

Mandano a terra falcole[3] d'argento.

Quando tu gli alzi con tanto splendore,

Mandano a terra falcole d'amore*.

[1] Forse per significar cosa rara. Di similitudini cosiffatte ne ha parecchie la Cantica.

[2] Più bello che il dantesco: *occhi pieni di faville d'amor*.

[3] La Crusca: falcola, cera lavorata; quasi come candela. Lat. *facula*.

* Pistoiese.

(Tommaseo 1841, p.68, vol. 1)

Having not only translated, but also collected oral material, Tommaseo was among the first to deal with and acknowledge the problems a collector might encounter when gathering material directly from performers, e.g. the difficulties in gaining people's trust and their reluctance to perform their material (in particular love songs) in front of strangers: "Mi mancava il tempo d'affiatarmi con loro: e promettere ricompensa, non valeva punto; tanta era la vergogna di ripetere ad uomo straniero canzoni amorose" (1841, p.8, vol. 1). This preoccupation with the reaction of narrators can be seen as the result of a face-to-face contact with informants,[60] but also as the birth of a different approach to folklore material, in which collectors start to pay more attention to the single individuals who form the "*popolo*". In consequence of this, and recognising the value of popular expressions contained in the *Canti popolari*, Tommaseo declared that editing them would be foolish, and that if one could not recognise their value one had better not read the verses at all: "le voci nel dizionario non notate, i modi schietti ed efficaci, le eclissi ... chi non sente da sé, né questi versi mai legga né verso alcuno" (1841, p.14, vol. 1). Finally, Tommaseo shows an interesting feature that, years before, Berchet had presented as

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when reading the *Romanze*, so that their impact may be reinforced and their original effect somehow translated (1912, p.117).

well: the awareness that a song, once written down, always lacks one important aspect of its structure, the oral word: "se nell'umile prosa mia qualche vita rimane d'ardimento e d'affetto, pensate la fiamma della parola, quale la mosse lo spirito greco negl'impeti suoi" (Tommaseo 1841, p.6, vol. 4). It is this awareness, in conjunction with Tommaseo's philological and ethnographical concern, that leads Cocchiara to view him as a "folklorist poet" and to acknowledge that with him a considerable step towards a systematic study of oral material was taken (1959, p.184). Italian folkloristics was acquiring a distinct shape.

3.3.2. Italian folklore onto the page

Towards the 1850s the Romantic approach to folklore texts started to fade, replaced by a greater attention to texts as "documents" (Cirese 1958, p.32). This fact, already visible in Niccolò Tommaseo, led to an increased attention towards potential editorial interventions, showing an accentuated awareness of the importance of the "*popolo*" in folklore collections. Gino Capponi (1853) realised that several collections had been embellished so as to acquire a more "artistic" outlook: "... mi pare che quei raccoglitori prendessero i proverbi piuttosto dai libri che dal popolo; ovvero, parendo loro che il modo popolare desse nel triviale, e' gli ritoccavano e davano la vernice non dico a tutti ma alla maggior parte" (5). Capponi exemplified this by comparing and analysing variations in proverbs: "trovo scritto: – *Se vuoi viver sano e lesto, fatti vecchio un poco presto*, e sento dire: – *Se vuoi viver sano e lesto fatti vecchio un po' più presto...*", where the difference between *un poco presto* and *un po' più presto*, although small, shows that the written version is more indefinite and therefore lacks the advice given by the oral one (ibid.).

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[60] Which had not taken place before.

A different attitude characterises Giuseppe Tigri's work. Alberto Mario Cirese (1958) notes how Tigri idealised the popular nature of folklore by "mutilating" the texts he collected according to a morality that left little space for documentation (33). Tigri did not make a secret of this. In his preface to his *Canti popolari toscani* (1860), he warned the reader about the modalities followed for collection, and stated that he had chosen the songs from among the really traditional and old ones, excluding those which appeared too modern or vulgar,[61] also adding explanatory notes that could help non-Tuscan speakers better understand them (vii-viii). Giovanni Bronzini (1960) reports how Giuseppe Pitré complained that Tigri's material was not collected straight from the mouths of performers and furthermore was turned into literary material, having lost all trace of vernacular (113). Tigri's admission and the criticism on his work are telling, because they show a passage from an editing approach to one that placed more importance in folklore material as a national heritage that the "*popolo*" retained and that, therefore, had to be preserved as such. In fact, Oreste Marcoaldi (1855) showed interest in his informants and noted the indissolubility of words and music: "... nel fervore del canto, animatore della poesia, rammentano ben anco cento strofe, e pochissime ne raccordano se a distesa vogliono dirle a mente: tanto è stretto il legame del canto col verso..." (1). Marcoaldi specified that in his view popular songs were only those created by the "*popolo*", and not merely repeated from a written source, "... opera di rettorici" (ibid., p.17).

The 1870s represent yet a further stage in the evolution of the "*popolo*" in folkloristics. The development of folklore gathering techniques, the broadening of the field and a more intense concern for the exact rendering of the words uttered by informants resulted in a change of perspective, or rather in an embryonic awareness

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[61] "Per questo, mentre ho voluto darne una scelta dei più originali, non potevano avervi luogo i moderni; e molto meno quelli che, sebben popolari, sentono troppo del triviale e talora, perché fatti

that the "*popolo*" was actually formed by many individuals. One of the results of this was the attempt to reproduce carefully the words that had been uttered by informants. Vittorio Imbriani (1840-1886) for instance took great care to record oral material in all its shades and variations, since even a variation which appears meaningless or trivial might be revealing when compared with other versions (Cocchiara 1947/1981, pp.96-97). His interest in a verbatim collection reflects a development of those aspects that until then had only been partially followed. Imbriani was aware that his approach was bound to raise objections; nevertheless, despite being criticised for his closeness to the effective narration, he believed in his methodology and rejected the suggestion of drawing inspiration from foreign collectors[62] for inspiration, because, as he stated in the introduction to his *Novellaja fiorentina* (1877/1981), "... mi stava a cuore di ritrarre esattamente la maniera in cui fraseggia e concatena il pensiero il volgo; e non avrei raggiunto lo scopo, colorendo da me, con qualche lieve ritocco, qualche sfumatura, qualche velatura, qualche piccola sostituzione o correzione" (vi).[63] An analogous concern is visible in Giuseppe Pitré, who turned to the study of Sicilian folklore, including in his study not only tales, but also proverbs, riddles and traditions in general. In Pitré the need for reproducing every single word seems to acquire a much greater importance than the aesthetics sought at the beginning of the century, "... ché dove l'arte dell'uomo di lettere entra o per modificare un periodo, o per togliere una ripetizione, o per ricondurre a suo luogo una circostanza, la scienza perde il frutto che s'impromette" (1875, p.xvi). Pitré stressed that his procedure was to record the words of narrators as soon they were spoken: "quanto a me, è ben noto

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dalle plebi della città, sono anche lubrici, e non hanno alcun merito dal lato della dizione." (Tigri 1860, p.xli)

[62] Imbriani mentions the Grimms (1877/1981, p. vi).

[63] In describing his method, Imbriani pointed out how he had noted down the tales he heard in shorthand, then had transcribed them, making a point not to change a word, even when, by doing so, the text might have been improved: "... avrei stimato delitto l'alterar checchessia, anche dove fondatamente poteva credere di migliorare" (1877/1981, p.x).

che io ho còlto quasi a volo la parola del mio narratore, e quale è uscita dalle sue labbra tale la ho, per così esprimermi, stenografata" (ibid.).[64]

Both Vittorio Imbriani and Giuseppe Pitré with their attitude drew attention to the fact that the "*popolo*" as an idealised and homogeneous organism was an unrealistic concept and that behind it there were individual narrators. with personal oral skills that could not be traced back to a collective and exoteric entity. A consequent and interesting aspect, particularly visible in Pitré's approach. is that he acknowledged how, despite the collector's effort, the passage from oral to written medium always implied a loss of those features (gestures, facial expressions, etc.) representing the hallmark of a specific narrator. As mentioned in section 3.1.2.. in describing the style of Agatuzza Messia, Pitré realised that, once written down. the tales she told lost half of their incisiveness, because they lacked those elements that characterised the woman's lively storytelling (1875, p.xix).[65] It is this attention toward individual narrators that leads Italo Calvino (1993) to affirm that with Pitré's collection one abandons the exoteric idea of the "*popolo*" as the agent of narration to take into account the various narrators' personalities (xxv).

Pitré was certainly not the only one to adopt this stance. As already mentioned, Imbriani made a point of writing down every word he heard, and so did Costantino Nigra (1828-1907) in his collection of *Canti popolari del Piemonte* (1888), where he

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[64] This attention to individual informants would be criticised during Fascism, when Pitré was seen as having failed to investigate the connection between folklore and nationality (Simeone 1978, p.546). "Il Pitré" stated Luigi Sorrento (1934), "per difetto di vigore speculativo... o timore di non apparire abbastanza scienziato, non affrontò in tutta la sua portata la connessione del folclore e del principio di nazionalità" (256).

[65] Pitré's passage is a good example of the similarities between orality and translation. Susan Bassnett (1980/1991) discusses the idea of loss in translation, noting how its prevalence in discourse reveals the (perceived) low status of translation itself (30). This is what Pitré seems to think, too, considering that he acknowledged a loss in the passage from oral to written and referred to the written word as "*nuda*" and "*fredda*". Yet he spent a substantial part of his life collecting and writing down these "naked words". One wonders why someone would "waste" so much time, considering that. being a well-off doctor, a financial reward was not his main concern. Pitré collected his material possibly because he believed there was some use in doing so. Bassnett points out that there is something to be gained in the translation process (1991, p.30). In Pitré's case, a whole local heritage of tradition is to be gained

pointed at the analogy between the text he presented and that he had been dictated: "il testo è stampato quale venne cantato o dettato a me, o quale fu trascritto dai miei collaboratori dal canto o dalla dettatura". (1957, p.xxxii). Several others followed this approach. In his collection, Cristoforo Pasqualigo (1876) noted how curious it was to find many words which did not belong to the local dialect, despite the fact that the songs had been dictated by illiterate people living in a remote rural area: "eppure, assicuro il Lettore che le contadine che me li dettarono, specie quelle della segreta valle di San Germano... eran povere diavole che non sapean né leggere né scrivere" (7). The emphasis on illiteracy seems to have been purportedly laid, as Pasqualigo is describing a situation where two contrasting images, words not in vernacular and illiterate people who can only use vernacular, are being compared. In order to stress his point even further, in a later collection Pasqualigo explained how, among many instances, he had selected only those elements whose popular origin could be guaranteed (1879, p.6). The same concern is found in Arrigo Balladoro (1900), who remarked how he had collected stories exactly the way they had been uttered by the narrator, without worrying about sentence construction and aesthetics: "il metodo da me seguito nel raccogliere queste novelle fu sempre quello di riprodurle quali uscivano dalla bocca del narratore, senza preoccuparmi se il periodare fosse più o meno bello, se le parole fossero più o meno giuste" (vii). Analogously, Giuseppe Bernoni (1873), who collected Venetian popular songs, explained that if the texts presented words that sounded more similar to Tuscan than to Venetian, one should not blame the collector, whose aim had been to convey the songs exactly as they were told (3). The fear of being accused of negligence must have been quite strong, seeing that Bernoni replied to criticism by quoting Imbriani's point of view as a

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by preserving it on paper and enriching it with comments that carry the narration beyond the boundaries of space (Sicily) and time.

confirmation.[66] Similarly, Balladoro preferred to make clear that any different spelling was not due to his poor knowledge of vernacular,[67] because he had taken the necessary precautions and cross-checked the popular origin of stories.[68] When changes had to be made therefore, they were stated in introductions,[69] in a way that reflects the comments made by English folklorists (see e.g. Charlotte Burne's reasons for not reproducing dialect features) in the introductory part of their works.

In conclusion, Italian folkloristics reveals an evolution from collectivity to individuality in the relevance given to verbal and nonverbal features as well as in the acknowledgment of narrators as individuals, which becomes explicit in the work of Giuseppe Pitré and his colleagues.[70] As noted in section 3.1.2., a parallel is possible between the attention the Grimms devoted to informant Dorothea Viehmann and that of Pitré towards Agatuzza Messia, showing the influence the Grimm brothers' approach had on the Italian work of folklore collectors. There is however another factor to take into account when supporting the idea of a passage from collective to individual. As discussed in the previous chapter (section 2.2.4.), the Italian scene in the 19th century is affected by a distinct regionalism fragmenting the newly created state. This aspect tends to draw much attention to the people of a specific region,[71] helping put in the foreground the strong influence of dialects on speaking. As a

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[66] Imbriani had suggested that songs never appear in their pure dialect but contain words from other languages, following a need to idealise the language (Bernoni 1873, p.1).

[67] "... avverto nuovamente il lettore di non voler accusarmi di poca conoscenza del dialetto... là dove riscontrerà voci annobilite..." (Balladoro 1900, p.ix).

[68] "... le volli più e più volte riconfermate da persone 'vergini d'istruzione' come disse il Pitré..." (Balladoro 1900, p.x).

[69] Cristoforo Pasqualigo for instance warned that he had to resort to a slight change in spelling for reasons of clarity: " devo finalmente avvertire aver io fatto all'ortografia del dialetto veneto una modificazione... Alcuni stanno ancora alla vecchia ortografia e scrivono: *chiamar*, *panochia*, *parochia*, *chiave*, *pochi* ... Ora, come fanno i non Veneti a sapere che queste parole si pronunciano così: *ciamar*, *panocia*, *parochia*, *ciave*, *pochi* ..." (1879, pp.8-9).

[70] For instance, Costantino Nigra acknowledged that the material he collected came from individuals and not from a collectivity, specifying that "sotto ciascuna lezione sta scritto il nome, se conosciuto, della persona che la cantò, la dettò o la trascrisse... (1888/1957, p.xxxii).

[71] It has to be noted that, although English collections sometimes carry the imprint of a specific geographical area (e.g. Burne's Shropshire, Harland's Lancashire 1867, Nicholson's Yorkshire 1890,

consequence, the collective nature of 19th-century folklore starts "shedding its skin", revealing under it a structure made of many individuals, whose peculiar characteristics become visible once their names and narrative skills are accounted for.

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Taking inspiration from the work of German pioneering "folklorists", in particular from that of the brothers Grimm, 19th-century English and Italian folkloristics postulated the decline of storytelling[72] and aimed to preserve such a cultural element by developing an approach to folklore that served the purpose of constructing, under different motivations, a heritage representing ideals of nation and national pride. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this heritage of poems, songs, ballads, proverbs, rhymes and tales came into being as the product of a collective entity called "folk" in England and "*popolo*" in Italy. Like the Grimms, English and Italian folklorists were eager to dive into the fruitful land of popular lore, with the intention of rescuing from oblivion the "primitive" but precious elements expressing the unity of the nation. In order to be preserved, these elements were translated onto the page generally without mention to their performers. This attitude made sense: the purpose was to show the unifying and reassuring power of collectivity, not to surrender to an individuality that spoke of destabilisation and fragmentation. However, this "rescue" operation bore unpredicted consequences. The action of collecting oral material in books, through

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Leather's Herefordshire 1912), Italian collections do so systematically, hardly ever failing to underline the place of origin of their material.

[72] Walter Benjamin (1936/1970) illustrates this idea with the figure of a disappearing storyteller, and notes that "... the storyteller in his living immediacy is by no means a present force. He has already become something remote from us and something that is getting even more distant" (83), identifying "the earliest symptom whose end is the decline of storytelling" in "... the rise of the novel at the beginning of modern times" (ibid., p.87).

an operation that mirrors a translation process, brought in the foreground the problem of representing nonverbal features, generating an awareness that did not lead to any attempt to represent these feature, but that nevertheless caused a shift of attention to take place, from collective folklore to individual performance.

Interval

So far this thesis has been discussing the idea that 19th-century folklore collections stemmed from an approach that considered orality as "folklore", in other words as a collective heritage which was seen a symbol of a national identity to reassert and be preserved in books in order to rescue such material (and the ideological meaning attached to it) from oblivion. The significance of folklore collections did not thus depend on their artistry, but rather on their value as cultural "binders" and testimonies celebrating the glory of the nation. Following this line of thought, the first movement has tried to emphasise the absence, in folklore collections, of vocal, postural and gestural elements that could reveal the presence of an individual behind an item of oral material, resulting in translations that reproduced the contents of orality but ignored the above mentioned features. It was highlighted how this translation choice was suggested by an attitude that saw the "folk" or the "*popolo*" as anonymous collective entities, as well as mere repositories of folklore tradition, into which they did not infuse any personal touch.

The next movement leaves behind the idea of collectivity to explore the possibility that individuality plays a relevant role in an oral event, thus advocating translating approaches that differ from 19th-century ideas of anonymity. The movement has been divided into two chapters, one highlighting aspects of orality that may acquire an individual character, the other proposing some possible solutions to the translation of such aspects. As it is felt that verbal and nonverbal features are central components of orality, this movement could be seen as an "objection" to the previous one, in that it revolves around features that had been by and large left out in 19th-century folklore collections.

In order to underline the fact that verbal and nonverbal elements acquire an individual "flavour" when put into effect by a specific narrator, one has resorted to the voice of several professional storytellers and one amateur storyteller. The latter

was also filmed while asked to tell a story, without specifying what kind of story. She was not warned in advance (she was simply told she was going to be interviewed) and so she wove her story off the cuff. Interestingly, no traditional folk tale resulted from her improvised narration and this was positive for at least two reasons. First of all, it produced a more "spontaneous" output (considering that the narrator was aware of being filmed), which avoided the danger of obtaining a "stilted" narration (which, given their experience, was not the case with professional storytellers) and allowed a better appraisal of her personal verbal and nonverbal features, putting individuality in the foreground and stressing even further the role of the narrator. Secondly, it became an example of what Joseph Jacobs had conjectured in 1893 (see chapter 2, section 2.1.5.), i.e. that in the anonymity of folklore there must be some sort of initiator among the crowd, somebody who uttered a given story for the first time. Being concocted ad hoc, the story in chapter 4 is suggestive of the various passages a piece of orality may go through, when told over and over. For instance, the story in question was recorded and part of it was written down, two operations that may be seen as two more passages, two "layers" added to the first telling. Supposing that more people listen to and tell it again, the story is likely to acquire a personal "flavour" each time a different person retells it, though by and large keeping its structure.

As a consequence of this increased attention to oral sources, the awareness of individual elements in orality broadens the field of discussion for translation. While 19th-century folklore collections had only allowed a transfer of contents, the current preoccupation with verbal and nonverbal elements of narration suggests the possibility of different translation approaches, each focusing on and trying to retain a specific aspect. They are by no means proposing final solutions; nevertheless, when contextualised they provide useful insight into the possibility of translating

individual features of orality, thus casting a light onto the passage from collectivity to individuality.

2nd Movement:
Orality and Individuality

4

ELEMENTS OF INDIVIDUALITY: AN ANALYSIS OF VERBAL AND NONVERBAL FEATURES IN ORALITY

The stories that are heard are not the same as the silence of the written word.

Gerald Vizenor, *Native American Literature* (1995, p.6)

As Gerald Vizenor suggests, "the silence of the written word" cannot convey all the facets of orality, the vocal features of narrators, the specific context, the precise moment in which narrating takes place. In this sense, "the stories that are heard" represent a rather different reality from that of the written word. A parallel can be made with translation from one language to another. A text is created in one language and obeys the linguistic and cultural rules of that language. Through a translating process another text is produced in a different language. As argued in chapter 1, sections 1.2.2. and 1.2.3., the idea of linguistic equivalence has been replaced by the awareness that a different language sets its cultural rules on the translated text. From this perspective, the translated text acquires a sort of life of its own. It is no longer considered as a ST in a different language, but becomes a quasi-independent text connected to the original through the umbilical cord of translation. A similar behaviour is visible in orality and its translation. Gerald Vizenor has remarked the difference between the audible nature of stories and the absence of sounds in the written word.[1] Once written down, stories acquire, like a translated text, a life of their own. However, like a translated text, they remain connected to their oral essence through translation. As a figurative umbilical cord, the translating

[1] To which one could also add the lack of visual elements.

process "nourishes" stories on paper, enriching them with the presence of oral features, i.e. of those facets of orality that were lacking in 19th-century written representations of folklore. These facets of orality constitute the focal point of this chapter and, from a broader perspective, also an indicator of a change in the perception of sources: the passage from collective to individual. Chapter 2 presented a discussion of the collective entity that gave birth to 19th-century folklore collections, in order to analyse the product of such collectivity. In a similar way, this chapter introduces a series of features that characterise the oral production of individual narrators. As pointed out in chapter 3, towards the end of 19th century Giuseppe Pitré had already remarked how his informant displayed vocal and gestural characteristics that were her own and that constituted her narrative style. This chapter argues for and develops what Pitré had suggested: oral skills form a complexity that, far from reflecting a collectivity, represents the narrative richness of single individuals.

4.1. THE COMPLEXITY OF ORALITY

"Quando viene trascritto fedelmente" write Bernardelli and Pellerey (1999), "il testo originalmente pronunciato appare caotico, impreciso, con una sintassi irregolare e frastagliata, dunque confuso, slegato, con parole senza un senso chiaro o evidente" (53).[2] However, despite its alleged blurry character, "... gli ascoltatori nella situazione reale lo hanno compreso chiaramente" (ibid.). Orality is based on verbal and nonverbal strategies that, when examined one by one, reveal a complexity which differs from that of writing because it responds to rules that are specific to spoken

[2] According to Anna-Brita Stenström (1994), spoken interaction is rich in hesitation phenomena such as silent or filled pauses, repetitions, verbal fillers, and incomplete utterances (1).

discourse.[3] Far from having a hazy, blurry nature, orality has therefore developed norms[4] whose adherence determines the success or failure of an interaction.[5]

The complexity of orality is visible in its structure. David McNeill (1992) notes that "narrative language is thus not a two-dimensional affair with only intersecting syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes: it has a full, rounded, three-dimensional structure..." (184-85). He then proceeds to identify three levels of narrative: narrative proper, metanarrative, and paranarrative (ibid., p.185). Whilst narrative proper refers to the dimension of the story itself, in metanarrative references are made to the structure of the narrated event or to the fact that it is a narration, whereas in paranarrative speakers temporarily drop their role of narrators to bring in personal elements, elicited response, opinions, etc. (ibid., pp.185-86). This third level is of particular interest in describing the complexity of orality, as it exemplifies how a narration depends not only on the skills of narrators, but also on their ability to interact with their audience. Unlike a sample of written narrative, where the relation between narrators and readership takes place in two different temporal segments, in an oral event the audience plays a direct role in the shaping of the resulting narration (see section 4.2.4., "interaction of participants") and in the behaviour of narrators themselves. For instance, the audience could elicit a response that leads narrators to make their narration more dramatic by accentuating face expressions and tone of voice, or narrators could be asked to expand on a particular element by mimicking a description with their body.

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[3] As Bernardelli and Pellerey (1999) note, "occorre conseguirne che le norme pragmatiche e retoriche della comunicazione orale sono diverse da quelle dell'efficacia comunicativa della scrittura" (53).

[4] Herbert H. Clark (1994) underlines that narrative requires organisation and narrators are expected to provide their audience with coherence and relevance (1013).

[5] The term "interaction" is here used to refer not only to casual conversation between two or more people, but also to situations in which a narrator weaves a tale in front of an audience. "Narrators" explains Herbert H. Clark (1994), "are rally guides. Starting from the here-and-now, they show you the story-world as a whole... Then they zoom in on that world, orient you to its features, and guide you from one narrative event to the next..." (1015).

As shown by the role of paranarrative, orality does not however rely exclusively on verbal features; on the contrary, it is also characterised by nonverbal signals that play a role in expressing, clarifying or underlining what is being uttered. Emotions[6] for instance find in paralanguage[7] and kinesics their natural means of expression. The fact that they are more easily expressed through gestures, tone of voice or facial expressions does not mean that emotions can only be communicated orally, but simply that, while in writing they are mediated through verbal signs, in orality they can be perceived through a number of different channels. Verbal and nonverbal[8] language are, according to McNeill (1992), substantially different, in that the former relies on a "linear-segmented" structure in which thoughts are divided and reconstructed according to a temporal continuum, whereas the latter conveys meaning in a multidimensional, global, instantaneous way (19).[9] These two modes of expression, which are linked to one another, interact to give shape to what McNeill calls "... a single integrated process of utterance formation" (ibid., p.35).

According to Cristina Lavinio (1993), "ogni narratore... è anche un drammatizzatore, che usa una serie di espedienti mimici, gestuali e paralinguistici" which are in their turn integrated by the audience's response (22-23). These elements, argues Lavinio,

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[6] Which are, according to Katharine Young (2000), "... constructed by and for the narrative in the course of which it appears" (80).

[7] Defined as dealing with "... nonverbal vocal cues surrounding common speech behaviour" (Knapp and Hall 1992, p.16). Harper, Wiens and Matarazzo (1978) define paralanguage as "... those aspects of verbal behavior not associated with language itself, that is, measures of speech that are content free" (20). On paralanguage, see also Poyatos 1992.

[8] Harper, Wiens and Matarazzo (1978) admit that the definition of nonverbality is indeed problematic, as different authors tend to classify its constituents in different ways (4). Similarly, Knapp and Hall (1992), point out that it is rather difficult to categorise neatly verbal and nonverbal features, as the line dividing them is not always clear-cut (5). For reasons of convenience, this thesis groups under the term "nonverbal" all that is perceived through sight, and also what is perceived through ear and is devoid of verbal content. "Nonverbal" is thus here divided into paralanguage (tone, silence, hesitations, etc.) and visuals (kinesics, proxemics, face movements, etc.).

[9] Although often used simultaneously for communication purposes, there are some occasions where combinatory use does not take place. Adam Kendon (1987) for instance notes that the auditory and visual channels cannot go side by side when one of the two prerequisites for their performance is not available, i.e. when auditory or visuals conditions (difficulty of hearing or seeing the speaker) are not present (83). In this case, however, one system can partially replace the other. For instance, if the environment suddenly becomes too noisy to hear, one can mime the concept one is communicating (ibid.).

are lost once translated onto the page, as they "... possono solo essere intuiti e ricostruiti a posteriori, ma sempre in modo inesatto, sulla base della parte unicamente verbale del testo narrativo trascritto" (ibid., p.23). Lavinio's words somehow echo Gerald Vizenor's idea that the page conveys a silent character which differs from the sounds of oral events. However, one cannot completely agree with Lavinio's view of the written text. Her use of the term "*inesatto*" reflects the idea that the written text is dependent on the oral, the same way a translated text was expected to be linguistically equivalent to its original. On the contrary, the written text born out of an oral event cannot be seen as an imperfect copy of such event, but needs to be understood in terms of something developing an independent life. Being a translation, there is a flow of elements from one side to the other, but the aspect these elements acquire once on the other side depends on the rules and strategies that the written text allows. Thus, the complexity of verbal and nonverbal features in orality can be efficiently reproduced on different media, bearing in mind the possibilities offered by such media.[10] By taking advantage of these possibilities and thus accounting for verbal and nonverbal features, one realises that the action of translating orality may actually bring in the foreground the presence of individuals behind narrations as well as their narrative complexity, in a product that rather than "*inesatto*" can be seen as making use of different instruments and rules to convey such individuality.

[10] On this topic, see chapter 5, section 5.2.

4.2. VERBAL FEATURES

4.2.1. Coexistence

Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis (1993) suggests that in speaking one can switch from one tense to another, for instance from past tense to present tense, in the middle of a sentence; this would show a shift from outside to inside the action (172).[11] An outside position, revealed by reported speech and objective description, seems to be common in writing, where the writer has enough time to re-evaluate events using retrospection (ibid., p.173). Similarly, Cristina Lavinio (1993) affirms that the speaker's "atteggiamento linguistico... può essere commentativo o narrativo" (43). The former quality implies the narrators' involvement in the contents of their narration and therefore the use of tenses that allow a view from inside the action: "il presente, il futuro e il passato prossimo..." (ibid., pp.43-44). On the contrary, the latter is characterised by a detached attitude and entails narrative tenses: "...imperfetto, passato remoto..." (ibid., p.44).[12] In the following example, such coexistence of tenses is further highlighted by a change in narrative speed, which slows down when action is described from the outside (lines indicate short pause, space indicates medium pause, double space indicates long pause, italics indicate speed):

> ...She took him by the arms 'n said come with me
>
> and she led him
>
> out of the garden – round the corner down the road
>
> *there's the church the graveyard*

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[11] In a similar way, Herbert H. Clark (1994) talks about "perspectives" in narration and points out how spatial perspective reflects the physical position narrators take in front of an object in their narration, whereas in temporal perspective narrators position themselves according to a specific time, past or present (1011).

[12] Though in the case of Italian one notes regional differences in the oral use of such tenses.

all these – old gravestones

Fred Bloggs born 1802 died 1836 you know and all these

uh crumbling and moss-covered

walked across the graveyard

bit further where they've the more recent ones

died 1953 died 1962 et cetera

and then round the corner to where – very recent ones were

and there

folded – neatly – on one of them

was his coat

couldn't understand this

(Castle 1992, "The Phantom Hitchhiker")

In the first three lines the narrator is positioning himself outside the action as he describes, using the simple past, the encounter and interaction between two characters of the story. In the lines in italics however, a shift occurs and the narrator projects himself "inside" the story, describing a typical graveyard as if he was walking among the stones. This effect is reached through the use of a different tense (*there's... they've...*), of an increased speed of narration and also through verbal deictic elements (*all these... gravestones* and expressions like *round the corner*), shifting the point of view from fantasy to everyday life. The last three lines re-establish the position adopted in the first lines, through a slower pace, longer pauses and the use of simple past.

4.2.2. Coordination of clauses

Walter Ong (1982) remarks that while written discourse makes use of different types of subordination to link clauses and sentences, oral discourse tends to be additive, i.e.

to resort to conjunctions like "and" (37).[13] Cristina Lavinio (1993) agrees and notes that orality is constructed through short sentences, less complex syntax and a prevalence of parataxis (21).[14] According to Ong (1982), writing adopts a different strategy, resorting to more complex grammatical structures because it lacks the context that sustains orality and that contributes to deciphering meaning (38). In storytelling, however, the coordination of clauses, in conjunction with repetition, may be effectively used also to obtain a sort of mesmerising effect that keeps the audience's attention focused on the narration in question. The following example reveals a frequent use of "and", as well as short clauses:

And

if you should see a house in West Bridgford, looking a bit derelict

with a very overgrown garden

you might look over the wall and see

seven mounds

and you might *go* into the house

and go up the stairs

and open the door on the landing

and see a chest and if you open the chest

you might find

a skeleton

with long black hair

and beautiful, pearly white teeth.

(Fairbarn 1992, "The Nottingham Vampire")

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[13] As an example, Ong (1982) quotes a passage from an old version of the Bible (the Douay version, 1610), where oral patterning was preserved: the passage includes "nine introductory 'ands'" within a few lines (37).

[14] Though Albert Lord (1987) remarks that subordinate clauses are not rare in traditional orality (55).

Through the use of coordination, the narrator is able to give musicality and rhythm to her narration in a way that may recall a lullaby. In addition, she introduces an element of surprise by suddenly interrupting her flow of additive expressions: *you might look over the wall and see... seven mounds*; *you might find... a skeleton*. By giving a nearly musical rhythm to her narration, she is then able to create a feeling of anticipation and suspense in the audience. The mesmerising effect of the lullaby, which had prepared the ground for an alien element, is thus broken.

4.2.3. Repetition

As noted, additive language may be supported by repetition,[15] which is generally seen as a mnemonic strategy, or, as Walter Ong (1982) says, "you know what you can recall" (33). Memory is however a point of debate. According to Ong (1982), in an oral culture "... to solve effectively the problem of retaining and retrieving carefully articulated thought, you have to do your thinking in mnemonic patterns" (34). Bernardelli and Pellerey (1999) confirm that one resorts to memory because "... il testo parlato scompare e si dissolve subito dopo l'uso" (56). From these positions it would appear therefore that the role of memory is that of an "anchor" used to block something that otherwise would go adrift, i.e. it would be forgotten. There are however conflicting opinions. Paula Gunn Allen (1983) argues that in Native American narratives repetition is used not as a mnemonic device, but to create a bond between ceremonies and their participants, analogously to the function of a chorus, which increases the audience's involvement in a given event (179). Hence, the fact that repetition ensures memorisation is not a main reason, since among Native Americans memory would be a tool already so well developed that repetition is not

crucial for this purpose: "... if this is a factor at all, it is a peripheral one, for nonliterate people have memories that are more finely developed than those of literate people" (ibid., p.181).[16] Similarly, Ruth Finnegan (1988) challenges the general idea that in oral cultures traditions are passed word for word down through generations, and prefers to stress variability, which becomes evident when one considers the relationship between performers and their audience, where the former need to be aware of their public's attitude and to modify their narrative accordingly: "... the performer/composer is aware of the need to speak in accordance with the demands of his audience rather than some authenticated but remote prototype" (69). Gunn Allen and Finnegan are basing their arguments on cultures that have carried out their cultural transmission chiefly on orality. One however wonders how true it is in different contexts that repetition is merely a mnemonic device. If variability is the case, then one can recognise some sort of creativity in narrators, who take responsibility for shaping their narration in function of something. One could therefore say that repetitions have at least more than one purpose. Finnegan (1992) for instance refers to Parry and Lord's oral-formulaic theory, according to which narrators perform an act of creation during the act of narration itself, improvising their performance according to their audience or their skills (121). Storytellers therefore would not memorise a fixed form, they would resort to rhythmic phrases and patterns (formulas) developed over generations (Lord 1960/2000, p.22).[17] In this case, the transmission of oral material would not involve memorised texts, but a set of formulas that poets resort to for their own performances (Finnegan 1992, p.121).[18]

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[15] Walter Ong (1982) talks about redundancy (39).
[16] Paula Gunn Allen (1983) suggests that the failure to recognise the real nature of repetition in Native American narratives lies in the "... projection of one set of cultural assumptions onto another culture" (182).
[17] Some of the poets recorded by Parry and Lord, notes Finnegan, were literate, whereas others had had contact with the written word (1988, p.144).
[18] Walter Ong (1982) recognises in formulas an aggregative element of the oral thought process (38).

These formulas, which may include simple sentences as well as themes and narrative patterns, help narrators give birth to their own version of a story. through a so called "composition-in-performance" mode (ibid.). One example of a formula is given by the following introductory verses:

Before my time

before your time

even before your grandfather's time

there was a hotel in Russia...

(Thomas 1995, "Saint Nicholas")

and also:

It was before my time

it was before your time

but it was in somebody's time...

(Thomas 1995, "The Pot of Dirt")

and the closing:

...now they were all happy

so are we

so put on the kettle Alan

we'll have a cup of tea

(Thomas 1995, "The Unicorn")

According to Cristina Lavinio (1993), formulas have an additional function: they bring the audience's attention back to non-narrative time and space (16).[19] For instance, in the above mentioned example the narrator bridges the story with reality by saying that "*they were all happy/so are we*" and by asking a person who is part of everyday reality to perform an everyday (i.e. not fantastic) action.[20]

Repetition serves however other functions.[21] Deborah Tannen (1987) remarks that speakers produce, through repetition, fluent speech with less energy and effort, and have more time to formulate what to say next (581). In addition, comprehension is improved, because a minor amount of new information is conveyed and so there is enough time to understand and process what has just been said (ibid., p.582). Repetition also strengthens connections among words and sentences, because it links new utterances to those previously produced and shows how the notions presented are connected to one another (ibid., p.583). Finally, it is used on a number of occasions for purposes of interaction, such as showing attention or appreciation of a joke, persuading or including in the conversation someone who was not present before (ibid., p.84). Repetition can include entire sentences or sentence structure as well. Cf. the following:

There was a man

and he was desperately unlucky

he had no food – and no money

and as if that wasn't bad enough

---

[19] And the opposite is also true: an opening formula helps shifting attention from everyday reality to narrative time. Cf. for instance the above opening *It was before my time/it was before your time/but it was in somebody's time...*, where the narrator is bringing his audience in a time that does not exist except in narration, thus simultaneously moving backward ("before") and out of reality.

[20] Lavinio (1993) notes that in this transition "la lingua delle narrazioni orali, messa in 'forma' e racchiusa dalla cornice, si manifesta... diversa dalla lingua della comunicazione quotidiana" (18).

[21] Lavinio (1993) calls repetitions "... veri e propri modalizzatori della narrazione orale", because they have a functional character which varies according to the effect narrators wish to give to their narration (19).

had a wife

who was desperate to have a baby

and no matter how hard they tried

they couldn't have a baby

no food, no money and no baby

and as if that wasn't bad enough

he had a mother

who was completely blind

no food, no money, no baby – and a blind mother

what could he do?

(Thomas 1995, "The Unicorn")

Here the repetition of a specific structure successfully stresses the poverty of the character, on the one hand conveying the idea that the man is so desperate he does not know what to do, on the other smoothing the ground for some kind of unexpected intervention to take place. It is therefore possible to split the above passage in three portions containing the same elements: 1) a man/no food, no money; 2) a man and his wife/no food, no money, no baby; 3) a man, his wife and his mother/no food. no money, no baby and blindness. These three segments are linked to one another by a reinforcing sentence, *and as if that wasn't bad enough*, which contributes to the general feeling that one problem leads to another in a sort of "avalanche effect" that only stops at the question, *what could he do?*.

4.2.4. Interaction of participants

Bernardelli and Pellerey (1999) underline the physical co-presence of speaker and audience, which enables them to share "... le conoscenze relative a tempo e luogo

presenti...” (55). Speakers interact[22] face to face with their interlocutors and in this way they not only reasonably share the same assumptions about the topic of conversation, but are also able to monitor the effects of the conversation on the hearers and to modify accordingly the format or content of what they are saying (Chafe 1982, p.45).[23] Speech can thus be viewed as matter shaped by internal and external influences, as Bernardelli and Pellerey (1999) show when they note that the production and development of a speech are influenced by contextual factors such as “... la situazione creata, le eventuali obiezioni o interruzioni, le direzioni impreviste della conversazione, le affermazioni degli interlocutori...” (55). The following passage illustrates such interaction:

> [A dying farmer has three children, two boys and a girl. Only one of them will inherit the farmhouse]
>
> About three weeks later
>
> the old farmer – died
>
> Now, the day after he died the three children took his coffin to the churchyard
>
> and they laid him in the ground
>
> full of years
>
> then they went back to the farm
>
> for the cold ham sandwiches **[mild laughter]**
>
> Now *you youngsters well know this*
>
> *for you always get cold ham sandwiches at a funeral* **[mild laughter]**
>
> *In fact there is an old Dales farmer's wife I know who refers to a funeral – as a slow walk in a*
>
> *ham sandwich* **[laughter]**

---

[22] By “interaction” one is mainly referring to narrative elements. However, the fact that it results from the actual bodily presence of speakers and public could also give this aspect a degree of nonverbality, depending on where emphasis is put.

[23] Murray and Rice (1999) confirm by highlighting how speakers can address their public directly, they can see and hear participants, and are able to provide information which suits their specific audience (xii).

She was ill the other day she had a cold so I phoned her up and said "Maud my dear

how are you?" She said "Well Taffy, put it this way

you won't be getting a slow walk in a ham sandwich yet" **[laughter]**

Anyway

after the ham sandwiches they sat down for the reading of the will

you know the saying – where there's a will there's a family **[laughter]**

The lawyer said

"Your father has willed thus

you each get – one pound"

"Oooh" they said – "No listen there's more – with that pound

you've got to buy something

that will fill every room in the house

from ceiling to floor and if you can do that

you get the whole farm".

[The first brother decides to get all the feather mattresses he can collect, in order to fill the house with feathers]

Took out his pocket knife

he slit the mattresses open

and he filled – every room in the house

with

[public] feathers **[narrator]** feathers

[The lawyer checks whether all the rooms have been filled, but in the last one he finds a gap between the feathers and the ceiling]

And the lawyer said "No no that's very clever

but unfortunately

not – quite – clever enough

so I'm afraid

you've not quite inherited it

you can go back now"

give him a clap **[clapping]**

(Thomas 1995, "The Farmer's Fun Loving Daughter")

The narrator adopts several strategies of involvement. First he refers to a sort of shared knowledge (*you youngsters well know this for you always get cold ham sandwiches at a funeral... you know the saying*...), which he uses for a witty remark, and then he temporarily shifts the time of narration from a hypothetical and imaginary past to the present reality (*In fact there is an old Dales farmer's wife I know... She was ill the other day she had a cold so I phoned her up... She said Well Taffy*...). In this way he succeeds in creating a link between his public and himself, by implicitly saying that they all belong to the same group and he obtains a reaction of hilarity. Another device employed in the passage is the use of pauses in order to stimulate a response from the public. After having told how the first brother got hold of every mattress in the county and above all after having more than once stressed "*feather* mattresses", the narrator takes a slightly longer pause, so that the public is encouraged to give the correct answer (*and he filled – every room in the house with* [public] *feathers* [narrator] *feathers*). A final strategy is to ask explicitly for participation (*give him a clap* [clapping]). Again, some kind of temporal shift is necessary here, in order for the audience to be part of the story.[24] This interaction between the narrator and his audience allows the former to monitor and, if necessary, modify the flow of conversation (Chafe 1982, p.47). This is a possibility that can be exploited in various ways. For example, speakers may add question tags to their

utterances in order to get some feedback from their listeners, or they can explicitly ask if the concept expressed is clear (and obtain an immediate response), or else make use of expressions which imply that their listeners belong to the same group as themselves and share the same knowledge (as in the excerpt above) (Chafe 1982, p.47).

4.3. NONVERBAL FEATURES: KINESICS

"When a person speaks" remarks Adam Kendon (1987), "muscular systems besides those of the lips, tongue, and jaws often become active" (76). Gesticulation, which includes movements of hands and arms but also of the face, becomes integrated in the discourse (ibid.).

Kinesics are recognised as speech-markers of various types: punctuating movements (emphatic elements), iconic gestures (presenting a figural representation of the object described), deictics, symbolism as in hand-waving to indicate a greeting, etc. (Rimé and Schiaratura 1991, pp.243-247).[25] Kinesics can be seen as typical of spontaneous spoken language and their use tends to increase in direct proportion to the density of oral communication, in that they are frequently used in oral performances (narratives, life events, personal involvement) and become less significant in memory tasks such as repeating digits aloud (ibid., p.252). Focusing on gestures representing images, David McNeill (1992) identifies several types of kinesics accompanying discourse:

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[24] Cristina Lavinio (1993) notes the frequent presence, in narration, of references to the actual context where narrator and audience are interacting (21).

[25] Allen T. Dittman (1987) calls these gesticulation movements "noncategorical behaviors", because they do not carry a particular meaning agreed by a given community, and seem to be performed randomly on an individual basis (55).

4.3.1. Iconics

McNeill defines these as bearing "... a close formal relationship to the semantic content of speech" (12).

Fig. 1

Fig.2

Figg.1-2: ...era in mezzo a una nuvola di fumo...[26]

In the above pictures, narrator Antonella is telling an incident that occurred on a New Year's Eve. Some friends, with their baby, had joined her for the celebration and they were all watching a firework show from the balcony. When they went in, they found the baby peacefully asleep in a cloud of smoke (caused by fireworks) that had come in from outside. In this scene, the narrator is clearly mimicking with her hands the shape of a cloud.

Iconics try to represent physically a picture that has taken shape in the speaker's mind and often are parallel to what is being uttered (McNeill 1992, p.13). However, it is also possible that a gesture does not correspond to what is being said; in that case McNeill talks of complementarity and underlines how the association of speech with a gesture that does not represent the exact words serves the purpose of conveying a

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[26] The images here discussed are taken from a personal video (see annexe) recorded 10 January 2005, in which the narrator told several episodes on the theme of fireworks and local celebrations for New Year's Eve. Though storytelling has been carried out in Italian, efforts were made to choose frames containing nonverbal behaviour that could respond to the points discussed in this chapter and therefore that did not represent any specifically cultural gestures.

more detailed account of the narrated event (ibid.). Considering this, one could also postulate that the narrator's mind contains more information than that actually conveyed through words, and that this information is somehow manifested in complementary iconics. For instance:

Fig.3

Fig. 3: ... *vedevi queste due testine che guardavano e volevano vedere...*

Antonella is describing how she had put her two cats in a large carrier covered by a blanket, so that they would not be frightened by the noise of fireworks. Every now and then she would check on the cats, and whenever the blanket was lifted, they would stretch their necks to see what was going on. Here Antonella is conveying the image of the cats not with her words, but with her gestures, which become an additional piece of information accompanying what she is actually saying.

4.3.2. Metaphorics

Metaphorics are again pictorial gestures, but they represent an abstract concept rather than a physical object or an event (McNeill 1992, p.14).

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

Figg. 4-5: ...e quando lo vedevano si fermavano...

The narrator is recounting an episode in which two teenage boys were having fun setting off firecrackers and making a lot of noise the afternoon before New Year's celebrations. A watchman was driving around the neighbourhood to ensure that noise was kept within limits and nobody was hurt. Whenever his car came in sight, the boys immediately stopped and stood still. Antonella's gestures are aimed to represent the passage from an excited action to a moment of sudden ad complete halt, caused by the boys' fear of getting reprimanded. In this sense, her hands represent not only the action of stopping, but also the feeling of anxiety and at the same time anticipation the boys were experiencing.

4.3.3. Beats

Gestures labelled "beats" visually reproduce the movement of beating time (McNeill 1992, p.15). When using this type of gestures, speakers accompany the rhythm of their speech with an equally rhythmic movement emphasising words (ibid.). Generally, these gestures do not represent the content of what is being said, and tend to come in the same form, e.g. short and quick movements of hands up and down

(ibid.). Beats, notes McNeill, have a value in that they underline specific words and in doing so they reveal the speaker's position towards what she/he is saying (ibid.).

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Figg. 6-7: ...ci sono due ragazzini... che sono due teppe...

Antonella's hand moves rhythmically up and down while she remarks how naughty the two young boys next door are. The function of her gesture is to pinpoint (also through the position of her thumb and index finger) her opinion about the two boys, in a way that could be compared to using a pencil to underline a passage which is felt to be important in a book.

4.3.4. Cohesives

David McNeill (1992) defines "cohesives" as a series of gestures that link together parts of speech related to one another but temporally distant (16). Cohesives can take several forms: iconic, metaphoric or deictic (ibid.).

Fig. 8

Fig. 9

Figg. 8-9: ... e noi chiuse dentro, anche perché, cioè, fa una puzza...

This sequence illustrates a shift in time. Antonella is narrating an episode that used to occur frequently during past New Year's Eves. Friends would gather at somebody's place and celebrate the new year with fireworks, but some of them did not quite like fireworks and felt safer inside the house, because, in addition to safety reasons, fireworks release a smoke that have an unpleasant smell. In fig. 9 Antonella abandons for a while her narration set in the past and comes back to the present, to underline something that holds true at any time, i.e. the fact that the smoke from fireworks smells unpleasant. In saying so, she draws her fist towards her, in a gesture that, although made in a different temporal setting, indicates consequence and therefore reveals that such setting is related to the previous one.

4.3.5. Deictics

Deictics literally point to abstract or concrete items (present or not present) of discourse (McNeill 1992, p.18).

Fig.10

Fig. 10: ... era lì dietro...

By pointing with her forefinger, Antonella is describing the physical position of her dog at a certain moment in the evening.

Fig. 11

Fig. 12

Figg. 11-12: ...da qua vedi tanti paesi in lontananza...

From Antonella's balcony one can see many villages at a distance. Antonella is using a deictic to indicate something that is not in close proximity and at the same time she describes with a semicircular motion of her finger the position of these villages. Later (fig. 12) she stretches her hand to emphasise how the surrounding area is scattered all over with smaller villages.

4.4. NONVERBAL FEATURES: FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

Knapp and Hall (1992) note how facial expressions may replace speech both in the communication of emotions such as boredom and in the elicitation of responses (262-63). In particular, gazing seems to have several communicative functions: it regulates communication by opening and closing communicative channels or sending turn-taking signals; it monitors one's interlocutor's response and allows to seek feedback; it reveals that some sort of cognitive activity is taking place (for instance by looking away); it expresses emotions; it reveals the type of relation existing between two or more interlocutors (ibid., p.298).

Fig. 13

Fig. 14

Figg. 13-14: ...a me sembrava di aver visto dei fuochi lì in fondo... hanno detto che non li facevano...

Antonella is saying that the city council had decided not to offer any pyrotechnic show and to give the money to charity, instead. However, Antonella had the impression that this was not entirely true, as she saw fireworks in the direction from where the council usually holds its show. In this case, the narrator's gaze is constantly on her interlocutor, because she is giving her opinion and implicitly

passing a judgement. She therefore feels it is important to check, through visual contact, that she is getting enough attention. In addition, her gaze reveals how important this point is for her, and Antonella highlights it even further by slightly raising her eyebrows (fig. 14).

Fig. 15

Fig. 16

Figg. 15-16: ... voleva venire, però poi si tirava indietro...

While outside firecrackers were banging, Antonella's dog, still a puppy at the time, was at the same time curious and frightened. Antonella's dog is a whippet, with long, thin legs which looked even longer when the dog was a puppy. Antonella is describing how the dog trotted out of her shelter like a racing horse, but soon after she would get scared and step back. The episode was worth being told not so much for the fact that the dog was having her first experience of fireworks, as to how this dog looked like while trotting and stepping back with her long legs. Antonella is therefore mimicking the dog's shambling gait and while doing so, she gazes at her interlocutor to check whether the image she is providing makes sense and elicits a reaction in her interlocutor.

4.5. NONVERBAL FEATURES: PARALANGUAGE

4.5.1. Prosody

Emotional states can be seen as having a direct influence on vocalisation, which therefore becomes a physiological indicator of what the speaker is trying to communicate. Knapp and Hall (1992) for instance remark how pitch variations are used to emphasise specific parts of the discourse, in some cases modulating the message with irony[27] (326-27). The following is an example of how voice pitch can convey different feelings:

> [A little boy lives with his parents in a solitary house and gets very lonely every time school is over, because he can't meet his schoolmates]
>
> Holiday came – and all his friends – went off on their holiday here and there and everywhere and the child was on his own and **[in a crying tone, crescendo]** he was very unhappy and he cried Mum – I'm so unhappy I don't like living here anymore I don't like you anymore I don't like all my toys anymore I don't like this house anymore I don't like anything anymore I'm fed up
>
> **[firm]** and I'm fed up
>
> **[stuttering]** an' a an' an' an' an' an' I'm fed up
>
> [His mother, in order to cheer him up, sent him to his grandmother. The little boy and his granny went down a coconut grove, to fetch some coconuts for tea. There, they found a very strange coconut which they decided to bring home. It's now bedtime.]
>
> And aaall was quiet
>
> until about – **[whispering]** midnight
>
> **[soft tone]** the child woke up

[screaming] Aaaahhh!

(Spencer 1992, "The Ghost")

Two emotional states have been here expressed through different vocalisation. The little boy's uneasiness with his loneliness is represented by a crying tone that increases with the child's growing frustration, until it reaches a climax and stuttering sets in (*an' a an' an' an'*...). The second emotional state, fear, is conveyed by a pitch variation, which firstly creates some sort of anticipation through whispering and soft tone, and then suddenly breaks the silence with a scream.

4.5.2. Speed

Writing, notes Wallace Chafe (1982), is slower than speaking, therefore writers and speakers have a different relation both to their audience and to the sequence of ideas that evolve in communication (37). According to Bernardelli and Pellerey (1999), "il discorso viene continuamente improvvisato ed è costantemente modificato rispetto al programma iniziale, ... poiché viene prodotto nel momento stesso in cui viene ideato" (55).[28]

In orality, speed can be used to convey the feeling of a situation that needs or is going to be solved quickly, pretty much like an action sequence in a film. The following example shows an eloquent opposition between the need for speed to get out of a dangerous situation and the leisurely pace of the rescuer (words stuck together indicate high speed):

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[27] By creating a discrepancy between vocal cues and words (Knapp and Hall 1992, p.327).

[28] Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis (1993) underlines this difference by comparing a written autobiography and an oral interview. She points out that while the writer could easily organise the story of her own life around a central theme and analyse it retrospectively, the speaker related her life through segments, each of them with its own theme (176). Etter-Lewis links this difference to time and space limitations: in an oral interview, time does not usually allow the production of very complex sentences and favours short, straightforward utterances that enclose a single concept; writing, on the other hand,

There was a mouse – of old

who's taking a walk through a wine tavern

and he happened by accident

to fall in – a reservoir of wine...

an' he found

thatnomatterhowmuchhetried

he couldn't – scrabble back out of the reservoir

andhebegantocall for help from anycreaturethatcouldhearhim

A cat

was strolling by

heard the cries of the mouse

and looked in – curious

and it saw – the mouse

struggling in the winehelphelp get me out please

The cat said

"Mmh

if I get you out

what will you give me?"

ThemousesaidI'llgiveyouanythingI'llgiveyouanythingjustsaveme please

The cat said

"Mmh

if I rescue you

you have to promise

to come to me

the next time that I call you"

Themousesaidyesyespleaseanythingjustgetmeoutofthispleasepleasesaveme

(Lynch 1997, "The Mouse and the Cat")

---

is controlled and consciously edited, therefore it can hide features that are typical of a speaker and that come to light through spontaneity (ibid.).

This passage contains three different speeds corresponding to three different points of view: the narrator's, the cat's, and the mouse's. The lines *There was a mouse – of old/who's taking a walk through a wine tavern/and he happened by accident/to fall in – a reservoir of wine...* represent the narrator's perspective and follow the pace he has decided to give to his narration. However, suddenly the framing shifts to the mouse. Speed increases (*an' he found/thatnomatterhowmuchhetried*), as the mouse is desperate to get out of danger. On the contrary, the cat is presented as very relaxed (*A cat/was strolling by/heard the cries of the mouse/and looked in – curious/and it saw – the mouse*) and speed decreases again to reflect the animals laid-back attitude. The vivacity obtained by increasing and decreasing speed to match it with the situation and point of view is aimed to project the audience into a narrative dimension that catches the audience's attention with the complexity of its oral devices and that, if performed effectively, may create in the audience a series of mental images even though there is no filmed story.

4.6. A DELICATE BALANCE

As this chapter has tried to demonstrate, orality is a combination of auditory[29] and visual strategies which combine together to give shape to a successful (or unsuccessful) communication. In the following excerpt, narrator Antonella has adopted several strategies to create a pleasantly fluid narration:[30]

---

[29] Including also silence. Marina Spunta (2004) highlights the importance of silence for orality, as it is "... in relation to silence that speech comes into being..." (50).

[30] Narration has been divided into segments of speech that do not necessarily represent pauses but are useful for commenting on the features they are accompanied by. Each segment has been taken as an example of one or more specific oral devices. This however does not exclude the possibility that the segment also contains features already described in other segments. For instance, if the use of pitch is discussed in a segment and not mentioned it in the following, it does not imply that the second

qua con gli amici

Una volta in... quando facevamo Capodanno

Antonella begins her story with a hesitation, then finds the words that mostly please her and proceeds with her narration with a slightly ascending tone, which introduces the topic of her conversation. While doing so, she looks away from her interlocutor as to smooth mentally the ground for the words that will complete and give meaning to her utterance.

si comprava sempre un sacco di botti *sì anch'io anch'io una volta

qua o a casa dei miei*

In this case Antonella's words have been overlapped by her interlocutor, who shows agreement and reveals a shared experience. As mentioned above, the interaction of speakers with their public is a feature of orality that shows how similar assumptions are shared and allows speakers to monitor the effects of the conversation. In the case of Antonella's utterance, her words are promptly confirmed by her interlocutor, who admits having had a similar experience. Antonella's monitoring is physically visible when, at the end of her utterance, she nods with eyes and head at what her interlocutor has just said. Her nodding is further emphasised, in the next segment, by the word *ecco*, showing verbal confirmation.

ecco e via e spara e noi chiuse dentro anche perché cioè [giggle] fa una puzza di di

come si chiama

---

segment is not characterised by a specific pitch. Characters in blue represent the narrator's speech, in red her interlocutor, in black comments; starred utterances are overlapping utterances; utterances at

zolfo

di zolfo sì di... bruciato

While telling about her past experiences with fireworks, Antonella's voice has taken a lower tone to stress the fact that she was not happy with such a way of celebrating. At the same time, she raises her eyebrows as if to underline this and does a gesture with her hands that reflects the idea of being locked inside but that also shows protection. Suddenly however she giggles; she is about to give a reason that defuses her concern.

e un gio... una volta sono venuti una coppia di nostri amici a far Capodanno qua

e avevano il bambino piccolo che era in culla ancora

e allora noi siamo andati

mi sa che era quello de... del 2000

sì sì era quello del 2000

siamo andati fuori per fare subito i botti tutto quanto però poi il il tutto l'odore di di

zolfo ti viene dentro

certo

e c'era il *bocia* [kid] qua da solo che dormiva che era in mezzo a una nuvola di fumo

e i genitori fuori che si divertivano a sparare i botti ho detto ma va... che genitori

il *bocia* avrà sì e no è nato a novembre aveva un mese

ho detto guarda che genitori degeneri voi fuori a divertirvi e che ha un mese solo

figurati quando avrà dieci anni ve lo dimenticate da qualche parte [laugh]

---

different spatial levels show a change in tone; dots indicate suspended words; italics reveal use of vernacular.

This longer chunk of narration is a sort of story within the story. After having introduced the subject and revealed her feelings about it, Antonella proceeds to narrate an episode that she feels will clarify and support her opinion. In narrating this episode, Antonella adopts some of the above discussed verbal features. Her clauses are co-ordinated according to an additive structure and a repeated use of conjunction *e*. In addition, she uses different tenses also in the same utterance, shifting from past to present, to future. This coexistence of tenses shows Antonella's ability to move from a narrative mode (use of past tense) to a commentative mode, useful to stress her point (*l'odore di zolfo ti viene dentro*) or to express an opinion (... *figurati quando avrà dieci anni ve lo dimenticate da qualche parte*). This ability to shift is further emphasised by Antonella's insertion of a "parenthesis" in discourse, in which she hooks her narration to a temporal dimension (*mi sa che era quello del duemila*). It is also worth noting the use of vernacular ("*bocia*"), which presupposes a shared knowledge between narrator and audience. In this case Antonella is well aware that she and her interlocutor have such shared knowledge and does not need to check whether her interlocutor has understood the word or not, because she already knows the answer.

però insomma è stato abbasta... dopo sono stata male quell'anno

perché siamo andati fuori

avevamo appena man... cioè stavamo mangiando perché

sono quelle cose che invitiamo gli amici poi sai ce la prendiamo comoda * sì sì

facciamo l'antipasto* così

ho preso freddo ho p... ho finito la serata [laugh]

per terra nel tappeto in bagno [laugh] perché stavo malissimo...

continuavo a stare male

troppo vino forse o quella botta proprio di freddo

This last segment represents a spin-off of the previous episode. Antonella is still narrating her celebration of year 2000, but she has shifted to a less cheerful episode that had occurred to her during the evening. While narrating the episode, she feels she needs to provide more information, so she decides to shift to a present tense and elicits a response from her interlocutor by explicitly appealing to a shared knowledge (*sono quelle cose che invitiamo gli amici poi sai ce la prendiamo comoda...*). This is further emphasised by Antonella's facial expression, seeking eye contact with her interlocutor and simultaneously making a gesture with her hand as to signify clarification.

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The analysis presented above illustrates the variety of strategies that are present in oral discourse. In conversation these strategies sometimes act as "involuntary muscles"; they are there and through their function they support oral discourse, but speakers may be unaware of putting them into effect. As a result, one has the impression that orality possesses a more simplistic structure than writing. However, what at face value appears as a plain, straightforward picture, on a closer look reveals an amazing interplay of different factors.

This chapter has brought in the foreground several verbal and nonverbal features of orality with the intention of marking the transition from collective to individual. Although these features fall into general categories that can be applied by and large to any speaker, the way they are actually performed is a typically individual aspect, as the chunk of narration analysed above has shown. Gerald Vizenor at the beginning

of this chapter remarked that "the silence of the written word" does not reflect the true essence of oral stories. Considering how "silent" was the folklore collected in the 19th century, perhaps one can say that much of this true essence is actually embodied by narrators. The perspective these features highlight, therefore, is a perspective where sources are represented by individuals with their oral skills. The passage from collective to individual leads to an orality which, being different from that of the 19th century, cannot be called "folk-lore" any more, as it is an orality that shows a strong personal imprint.

5

THE INDIVIDUAL IMPRINT REVEALED: CIRCUMSTANTIAL CHOICES IN THE TRANSLATION OF ORALITY

> Chi predilige il testo popolare genuino non mi potrà perdonare d'averci "messo le mani" e anche soltanto d'aver preteso di "tradurre". Chi d'altra parte rifiuta il concetto di "poesia popolare", m'accuserà di timidezza e mancanza di libertà e pigrizia...
>
> Italo Calvino, *Fiabe italiane* (1956/1993, p.xx)

In his collection of tales, Italo Calvino applies the term "*tradurre*" to the translation of vernacular parts into Italian. Nevertheless, his statement reflects quite well the dilemma at the root of the translation process through which the oral is transferred to print or onto a magnetic, electronic or digital medium. How to translate an oral tale into a different medium, what to retain and what to leave out is a decision that translators have to make according to their view of the ST, their aim and the elements they deem more important. As Calvino implies, pleasing everybody is not a realistic task, as people who see the ST in a certain way will not be satisfied with a translation choice obeying a different priority. This situation is even more visible when the SL and the TL (target language) coincide, e.g. when translating orality into the same language, although using a different medium. Having access to the ST brings in the foreground issues that reflect those being debated in interlingual translation, making them possibly more visible. Calvino refers to a readership that is bilingual; they are familiar with both vernacular and Italian, and as such they are able to argue against the choice of "*metterci le mani*" or that of being reluctant to make more changes. Similarly, being able to access an oral event and its translation allows the recipients of this translation to express a judgement based on their perception of

the nature of sources and ST. Supposing for instance that some performance-oriented scholars read Calvino's collection from the point of view of "total translation";[1] they would most probably disagree with the fact that Calvino transformed tales that were orally told into stories to be read, ignoring issues such as verbal and nonverbal features. Likewise, somebody interested in the preservation of a given vernacular might argue that such element does not appear anywhere in the collection.

At the same time, the current awareness of the existence and the nature of oral sources results in a specific attitude towards the translated text. There seems to be a concern for retaining elements other than the mere content of the stories and this shows a shift of perspective. The introduction of recording devices has made translators (and in some cases also the public) aware of sounds and images, casting a light on the sources of oral material and hinting at their individual nature. By paying attention to verbal and nonverbal features, the narration process is implicitly acknowledged and, consequently, the narrator is given a visibility that the 19th century, with its emphasis on "folklore", had denied. In this sense, paying attention to individual features can be seen as a milestone in the passage from collectivity to individuality, as much as 19th-century folklore collections highlighted an attitude that identified a collectivity as the originator of such material. But there is more than this. As will be argued, not all translations display a similar attention to performance elements. Some prefer to lay emphasis on linguistic features only (e.g. dialects), others highlight individuals by stressing their physical presence (e.g. describing their appearance, mentioning their names or recounting anecdotes). As a consequence, the individual nature of this oral material may vary in its representation. In the last analysis, translating an orality with an individual imprint is a process that lays bare the complexity of orality discussed in chapter 4 and, as Calvino lamented, the

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[1] Chapter 1 provides an explanation for this expression.

difficulty of finding an approach that pleases everybody. Nevertheless, this difficulty also becomes a stimulating aspect, as it gives space to a debate revolving around the possibilities that this translating process offers. Section 5.1. draws from several discussions about the problems and possibilities of translating oral narrative. Many of the contributions here presented tend to ignore the passage from oral A to written A (see chapter 1, section 1.2.1.), preferring to discuss directly the passage from oral A to written B. They are nevertheless a useful starting point, as they stress the similarity between these two operations. As already mentioned, both these passages can be seen as translations, provided that the arguments referring to the passage from oral A to written B concern translation and are applied to the passage from oral A to written A. Since in this case they do, the latter passage may not only benefit from these arguments, but also add emphasis to them, because the readership has a potential access to the source. Similarly, section 5.2. stands on perspectives that are based on the passage from oral A to written B, but that nevertheless prove to be versatile enough to support a discussion on translating from oral A to written A. The section shows the benefits of such a perspective by presenting three different approaches and a range of possibilities for translating orality. The first approach deals with traces of orality in writing. Orality is used to create a specific type of narrative, where the oral, enclosed in the domain of print, influences and modifies the written. The second approach is concerned with graphic aspects of translation; it aims to show how the issue of writing down orality has been tackled from different perspectives. The third approach leaves the domain of paper and print, to examine ways of translating orality into different means. These different approaches are not meant to be a mere display of possibilities. The fact that orality can be translated according to various perspectives leads to the hypothesis that the process of translating is dictated by a circumstantial choice. That is why section 5.3. argues for

a functional approach that may be useful to bring the translation of orality into a better focus, i.e. to make the phrase less generic by highlighting its dependence on a specific skopos. As mentioned in the introduction, in TS the idea of skopos is associated with a theory suggesting that the translating process is influenced by extralinguistic elements, with particular emphasis on the recipient, the commissioner and the function established for the intended translation. Here the notion of skopos is presented as also relating to sources, in that their established (by the translator) role may determine through an equally established skopos the type of translation that will result. In other words, when translators view sources in a certain way and carry out their translations accordingly, they are implicitly obeying a purpose: that of conveying through translation their perception of the source in the best possible way.

5.1. On translating orality: pros and cons

Jerome Rothenberg (1992) acknowledges the flexible nature of translation and argues that "... I would be wrong, when dealing with a poetry as grounded in the sacred as the Indian, to treat translation as merely literal, a mechanical act, for which the rules need only be laid down and the intended results will follow" (64). Rothenberg is convinced that translation, in particular the translation of Native American poetry (which is often oral) cannot be a mere reproduction of an original; on the contrary, it is intended as a "... commentary on the other and itself and on the differences between them" (ibid., p.65). "Every translation is a divergence" continues Rothenberg, "and the interest of translation as such is as a record of its own divergence: a comment on its failure to be source" (ibid., p.68). The divergent

potential of translation and its association with the nature of orality, little fit for fixity, highlight different facets of both phenomena.[2]

Several different attempts have been made to solve, or at least to come to terms with this. In some cases the process of translating lays emphasis on a purported impossibility of translating orality, in other cases it finds a solution in a specific approach. Harold Scheub (1971) points out that, when dealing with orality, one of the main problems is not the passage from one language into another, but the passage from oral to written form, because "the translation of a narrative-performance *freezes* in the written word... and suggests a *permanence* which is not characteristic of the oral system which produced it" (28; emphasis added).[3] Scheub remarks the loss of vitality that oral performances suffer when sound and rhythm are removed (ibid., p.32).[4] Acknowledging the difficulties of translating orality into a material format, he also notes that some of the difficulties can only be overcome by resorting to multi-media aids, adding however that "... even then the impact of the original performance is diminished" (ibid., p.28). A translator, according to Scheub, has to develop awareness for the poetics of orality, as what on a page appears awkward or fragmented may not have produced the same effect when it was performed (ibid.,

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[2] For instance, one might decide to view orality as a repository of cultural memory or one could take it as a symbol of diversity. In both cases a crossing is performed; as Wolfgang Iser (1996) notes, "memory crosses boundaries to a past; otherness crosses boundaries to an outside" (298). And Sanford Budick (1996) adds that "whenever we attempt to translate we are pitched into a crisis of alterity" (22). Arnold Krupat (1992) raises the problem of translating otherness (In Krupat's case, otherness refers to Native American culture); the fact that a performance is translated, first on the page and then also into a foreign language (In Krupat's case, into English), puts it in relation to the target culture conceptions, privileging either sameness or difference (4). In either case, translation reveals an imbalance due to the loss of a given aspect of the original performance, be that aesthetic quality or literal accuracy (ibid.).

[3] Barbara Reeves-Ellington notes that translators have to consider the variety of oral features (verbal and nonverbal) present in the narration, for which translating may be a problem, given that what is directly perceived visually can only be described in writing, and therefore may fail to achieve a sense of immediacy: "the text fails to reveal shrugged shoulders, arched eyebrows, or tears" (Reeves-Ellington 1999, 108).

[4] Aurora Milillo (1977) states that "un documento culturale – come è il racconto – appartenente a una cultura orale... trascritto, cioè trasferito immediatamente nel sistema di comunicazione della scrittura... diventa un documento violentato, stravolto e quindi falsato" (31). But in Burton Raffel's (1986) opinion, "one needs to try to reconstruct, on the page, at least something of what the tightly joined combination of words and melody produces, in performance" (17).

p.29). That is why, in Scheub's opinion, form and content in orality cannot be separated, as reproducing only one of them would entail providing only a partial translation (ibid., p.31).[5] Scheub's stance exemplifies the dilemma that performance-oriented scholars have been facing for several decades, i.e. how to reproduce on paper elements pertaining to the oral domain. In a sci-fi world, translators would probably construct holograms out of oral performances and let narrators "do their job" over and over, thus solving not only print constraint, but also problems related to audiotapes (no pictures) and camera shots (different angles). Though this solution is not yet available, one should not misunderstand Scheub's words as aiming to discourage from translating orality. On the contrary, they are an invitation to become aware of the multidimensional and fluid nature of orality in order to work out a translating approach that meets the requirements for that event.

It has to be added that the fluidity characterising orality is in part also due to the social dimension in which it takes shape. Regna Darnell (1989) notes that

> Folklore as a discipline has all too often existed in a vacuum from which texts are abstracted for the edification of outsiders about the cultural context of their performance... It has become clear that a living folk tradition has a potential for creativity and modification such that the most interesting text may be one which is adapted on the spot to a new audience or a new situation (315).[6]

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[5] Interviewed by Laura Coltelli (1990), Gerald Vizenor has proved outspoken about the issue of translating orality, and believes that, since stories possess a living, fluid nature, one cannot translate them; it is only possible to produce one version, which however becomes a "... kind of scripture, as if it's a litany, that you have to subscribe to and repeat and memorize" (164).

[6] Dennis Tedlock (1977) argues that "live performances are situated amid singing birds and barking dogs, falling rain and thunderclaps, together with the responses of an audience whose members, unlike the collector, understand every word" (509).

As argued in chapter 4 (section 4.2.4.), an oral event is the outcome of a co-operation between performer and audience.[7] This is why Regna Darnell (1989) also observes that "the folklorist, as a result, can no longer rely solely on a tape recorder in front of an isolated informant... Narrative performance is in essence *social* activity (315; emphasis as in original).[8] The risks of neglecting the social dimension of orality can lead to negative consequences. For instance, according to Cristina Lavinio (1993) one may lose the pleasure given by narration in a natural context: "è un piacere del testo che si perde... quando il ricercatore si rivolge al narratore tradizionale... non per godere del testo narrato, come invece accade nei contesti narrativi naturali... ma per registrare e documentare l'esistenza di racconti tradizionali all'interno di quella data comunità" (6). It is a pleasure that becomes even more diluted, continues Lavinio, when narration is translated[9] on the page, as this results in a depreciation of the artistic value of orality: "il fatto che il piacere del testo si perda ulteriormente e sia molto meno percettibile quando si passa dalla narrazione orale alla sua trascrizione, anche fedele, ha fatto sì che spesso i racconti popolari siano stati considerati più come meri reperti che non come prodotti artistici di una cultura" (ibid., p.7). Once more, these perspectives may appear discouraging when attempting a translation of oral material, yet they must be credited with highlighting constituents of orality that during the 19th century were left out or considered unimportant. Although they

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[7] Jan Vansina (1985) notes that "the public is active. It interacts with the teller, and the teller provokes this interaction by asking questions, welcoming exclamations, and turning to a song sung by all at appropriate points of the action" (34).

[8] Dell Hymes (1992) stresses the difference between the audience of an original performance and that of the translated product, noting how the former shares a background knowledge with the performer (idiom, forms of expression, conventions), while the latter lacks this information and in the translated version "what they see... is what they get" (87). Paul Zolbrod (1992) remarks that in an oral event even a gesture like a gaze becomes a rhetorical device, as it is supported by the interaction between performer and audience (243). There is, continues Zolbrod, a "dynamic immediacy" between performers and audience which cannot be conveyed to the remote receiver of translated orality (ibid.).

[9] Lavinio uses the term "trascritto" which, as discussed in chapter 1, does not emphasise the translating process occurring in the passage from oral to written. Curiously, Lavinio also talks about fidelity ("...quando si passa dalla narrazione orale alla sua trascrizione, anche fedele..."), as to suggest that, despite the fact the text is a transcription, it nevertheless behaves like a translation, presenting according to the case a high or low degree of loyalty to the original text.

emphasise difficulties, the very fact that they account for the problems that the passage from oral to written form involves points to an awareness of oral sources and their narrative skills, and this awareness finds a *raison d'être* in the idea that such skills present a degree of individuality. On the other hand, the above presented doubts do not need to go unanswered; as suggested, they are useful in so far as they underline sensitive areas, not as long as they prevent any attempt to translate orality.

"Isn't the act of translating necessarily a utopian task?" asks José Ortega y Gasset in describing "the misery" of translation (1937/2000, p.49). Ortega y Gasset's utopianism revolves around the idea that translation is not able to produce an output perfectly coinciding with its original, ending up as a "permanent literary *flou*" (ibid., pp.51-52). Walter Benjamin (1923/2000) points out that "fidelity in the translation of individual words can almost never fully reproduce the meaning they have in the original" (21). Nevertheless, in this impossibility of "photocopying" the original also lies what Ortega y Gasset calls "the splendor" of translation (1937/2000, p.60). As mentioned in chapter 3, section 3.3.2., Susan Bassnett (1980/1991) argues that the idea of "lost in translation", in which a translated text seems to present a poorer quality with respect to its original, is not necessarily the only result attainable (30). Since translation is not a perfect replica of the original, but a instrument which leads to the original work (Ortega y Gasset 2000, p.61), it acquires also a nature of "guide" that could be a key element to understand the need to translate orality and to avoid viewing such a translation as an "inferior" product. Julie Cruikshank (1999) laments that "written, textual transcriptions of spoken language have the potential to freeze, or arrest speech" (97). However, having spent a long time working with oral narratives in collaboration with Native American elders, she is also aware that there are reasons for which translating orality is desirable. One of these reasons is that, once written down, texts acquire a social prestige among storytellers, as they are

considered points of reference that narrators can quote in various occasions, e.g. to talk about family members, or to validate their stories in front of a vast audience: "written texts become points of reference to which narrators can allude when they want to make socially significant statements... about the potential of stories..." (Cruikshank 1999, p.98). The written version in this case acts as an authoritative source giving credit to what is orally narrated.[10] The second reason Cruikshank gives is social and educational in nature. In the Yukon territory, where she has been working, children use English at school and English becomes their first language (1999, p.103). Cruikshank remarks how storytellers see written stories as a means of teaching children (whose learning method is dependent on reading) about their traditions (ibid.). The narratives thus translated become a link between the traditional world and the "paper world" of formal education (ibid.). Finally, translating stories can be seen as a way of bringing a performance to a public unfamiliar with the language or the conventions used (ibid., 104). In other words, writing down stories would allow people who do not share the background of the narrator to become familiar with a world they would otherwise be alien to, and thus to appreciate narratives beyond cultural barriers (ibid., pp.104-105).[11]

Deborah Cameron, who analyses spoken discourse, shows an approach that can be somehow paralleled with Cruikshank's argument mentioned above. Speech, notes Cameron (2001), is ephemeral in nature and tends to disappear in the air as soon as it is produced (31). On the contrary, writing gives readers the possibility of having under their visual field a succession of words at the same time (ibid.). By resorting to

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[10] It is interesting at this point to note how the notion of authority may vary in perception. Cruikshank calls written texts of oral narratives "points of reference", thus qualifying them as authoritative versions. Yet they are translations of formerly narrated stories. In other words, by referring to an original they are, to quote André Lefevere (1992), evocative of a more prestigious text (2).

[11] Indeed, "who benefits by translation...?" asks Brian Swann (1992), who also attempts an answer: all those who need or wish to have information about their cultural heritage and who cannot easily find it available (xvii). The problem, explains Swann, at least for Native American cultures is that their

written texts, spoken discourse can easily be brought into focus and analysed even in its less noticeable components or those considered negligible (ibid., p.33). Cameron notes that some characteristics of orality, for instance hesitations, repetitions or fillers, tend to be overlooked because considered incoherent and repetitive (ibid.). Yet, these elements are important parts of orality and serve the purpose of giving the discourse coherence (ibid.). Writing down orality is useful, because it visually focuses on oral features and helps viewing these features as strategies serving a specific purpose (ibid.).

The process is viewed positively also by Walter Ong (1990), who believes that "by putting words into a text we do not freeze them... We only suspend the dialogue with the writer until a reader chances along" (207).[12] Similarly and although admitting that one cannot thoroughly know a people without a direct contact, Aïda Bamya (1984) does not reject the idea of translating orality,[13] because "malgré toutes les pertes subies par un texte au cours de sa traduction, il est nécessaire, pour faire connaître le folklore d'un peuple, de le traduire" (381).[14]

It appears therefore that problems of translating orality are counterbalanced by positive aspects inherent in the process. Once again, the balance between loss and gain that characterises any type of translation comes into play. Cruikshank has stressed the importance of providing a culture with an authoritative voice to which performers can refer in order to gain prestige; she has also pointed to the need of resorting to a concrete, tangible medium to carry on a tradition and make it available to young generations. Cameron has highlighted how writing orality can help

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orality is often collected in forms hardly available to non-specialists, with the result that the work of that community becomes alien to the community itself (ibid.).

[12] According to Ong, the written text is always based on speech, if only because it requires, in order to be decoded, a reader (1990, p.206).

[13] Bamya discusses Algerian oral literature and refers to interlingual translation, but she is also aware of the problem of translating orality into a written form.

"anchor" a discourse for later analysis. Finally, Bamya favours translation because it allows outsiders to know the culture of a people. All these arguments have a common element: they revolve around the idea of spreading knowledge. It seems therefore that, despite the objections previously mentioned, the function of disseminating knowledge and awareness (that one can possibly apply to the very concept of translation, regardless of the genre) becomes manifest in the translation of orality. On the other hand this willingness, associated to the problems discussed above, points to a specific attitude in the translation of orality, which treats it as coming from an individual and thus seeks to reproduce in print or in whatever other medium the features of individuality considered more salient for the purpose. One may for instance think in terms of narrator/audience interaction, and so choose to translate that oral event giving more space to this element; or else, one may want to stress visuals, i.e. the gestures and facial expressions of the narrator, or vocal elements, therefore opting for an approach that gives these features an adequate visibility. All in all, it seems that analysing the pros and cons of translating contemporary orality points to not to the impossibility of translation, but rather to a series of circumstantial choices.

5.2. APPROACHES TO TRANSLATION

5.2.1. Orality in writing

The 19th-century encounter of oral and written may be reconsidered and examined under a different light. The encounter, the interface in Goody's terms, between these two modalities becomes more than a connection of two separate elements; it

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[14] J. Edward Chamberlin (1999) notes that stories can be handed down from generation to generation when recorded in a written form which will preserve them in the same way orality used to preserve tradition in the past (70).

becomes a new territory, in which the oral and the written intertwine and are transformed, originating a hybrid product where the emphasis is no longer in the attempt to translate orality *into*, but in the mutual influence of both the oral and the written. Robin Lakoff (1982) notes how the dichotomy that puts literacy and orality in competition, where the two are seen "fighting" against each other from totally closed-up positions, represents a dualism that is less and less visible (239-40). Pointing out that some features ascribed to orality are not specific to the vocal channel but to the speaker's position with regards to other people, Lakoff proceeds to argue that spontaneity, often deemed a characteristic of the oral medium, may be present in writing, too,[15] and vice versa, forethought is not necessarily a specificity of written discourse[16] (ibid., p.241). Similarly, Elena Pistoiesi (2004) highlights the mutual influence of the oral and the written analysing emails, chat and SMS. According to Pistoiesi, the communication that these media provide has a peculiar character, because it presents a writing that has overflown, acquiring elements that did not use to fall into its domain: "... prima si è spogliata della sua materialità facendosi digitale, poi ha insidiato i domini tradizionali dell'oralità, trasportando l'informazione in tempi vicini a quelli del parlato" (10). This overflowing, which absorbs oral elements, makes writing different from its original form, to the point that Pistoiesi quotes labels that try to give a specific name to such a phenomenon: "written conversation", "face-to-face scripturality", "written speech" (ibid., p.18). This is what leads Marina Spunta to identify traces of orality in contemporary Italian fiction, following a hypothesis according to which a dualistic view of orality and literacy needs to be overcome in favour of an interaction between the two genres. Spunta (2004) argues that "while traditional scholarship has tended to adopt an oppositional approach to the study of orality and literacy... more recent research has

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[15] E.g. in streams of consciousness (Lakoff 1982, p.241).

questioned the binary, hierarchical nature of these two phenomena, and has moved towards a more flexible, encompassing, cross-modal model of communication..." (14-15). According to Spunta this is due particularly to the influence of different media technologies, whose modes have contributed to create a hybridisation of literacy and orality where the written becomes aural and the oral becomes visual (ibid., p.16). Albert Lord (2000) rejects the existence of what he calls a "transitional text", arguing that the hypothesis of a single individual composing epic by resorting to a combination of oral and written modes is not feasible, as the two are "... contradictory and mutually exclusive" (129). However, Marina Spunta's work shows exactly the opposite, i.e. a mutual influence of oral and written in composition. The problem seems to lie in the idea of "transitional" and may be connected with perceptions of translation. Susan Bassnett (1980/1991) notes that translation is generally seen as "the rendering of a source language (SL) text into the target language (TL)..." (2). It is a concept of translation that involves a passage, a transition, a "carry across" procedure which is reflected in the word "translation" itself. In other words, translation can be compared to crossing a road: one side is given by TT, the other side by ST, the pedestrian crossing in between is translation. When this idea is applied to orality, the transitional aspect Lord was arguing against resurfaces. However, if one drops the notion of transience, which recalls something uncompleted and on the way to become something else, one can see the translation of orality as a "tertium quid", to use John Niles's terminology,[17] a product which is neither entirely oral nor entirely literate, but that presents nevertheless a life of its own, which is given by the intertwining of both modes. If one considers the

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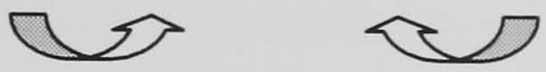
[16] Lakoff (1982) mentions political rhetoric as an example of spoken forethought (241).
[17] "Such a text is a *tertium quid*: a new type of literature that has arisen as a kind of prize, displayed in the public arena after having been captured in the borderlands where literacy meets orality" (Niles 2003, p.223).

encounter of written and oral as a mutually influencing encounter, one may start to see translation as a bidirectional event. In other words, instead of this movement:

ST → translation → TT

where TT becomes the final destination, one would have the following:

ST ← translation → TT



in which translation represents a middle territory born out of the influences of both ST (orality) and TT (print/record).

Using Marina Spunta's analysis as a point of departure, it is therefore possible to identify in written narrative various instances in which the oral and the written come together to produce, as mentioned, a hybrid item bearing elements of both modes. Italian has for instance profitably made use of dialects in written narratives, as symbols of orality that generate an "in between" product. Mariano Castello (2001) for instance writes using the *vicentino* dialect:

> Mio padre continuava a dir su. Non s'inrabbiava mai, ma era tutto un continuo predicare. Quando fu in pensione, voleva mettere la pessa anche nelle tece dove mia madre preparava un fià di magnare. Le diceva come bisognava missiare: lui lo sapeva perché sua madre era stata coga a 'sti tempi antichi. In realtà non sapeva ben cosa fare e, quando mia madre diceva "Va a camminare, va là, che grande che te sippi, te me intrighi qua in cusina", lui magari prendeva su la scoa e andava a spassare il pezzo di strada davanti a casa (83).

This passage illustrates how orality is taken, reproduced using a means that is traditionally a domain of the written word and intertwined with it, creating a product that bears testimony of a translation of oral into written and of written into oral. Cf. the presence of the two modes in the same passage (bold represents *vicentino*; Italian translation in square brackets):

> Mio padre continuava a **dir su** [brontolare]. Non **s'inrabbiava** [si arrabbiava] mai, ma era tutto un continuo predicare. Quando fu in pensione, voleva **mettere la pessa** [dire la sua] anche nelle **tece** [pentole] dove mia madre preparava un **fià di magnare** [un po' di cibo]. Le diceva come bisognava **missiare** [mescolare]: lui lo sapeva perché sua madre **era stata coga a 'sti tempi** [era stata cuoca a quei tempi] antichi. In realtà non sapeva **ben** [bene] cosa fare e, quando mia madre diceva "Va a camminare, **va là** [dài], **che grande che te sippi, te me intrighi qua in cusina** [per quando adulto tu sia mi ostacoli qui in cucina]", lui magari **prendeva su** [prendeva] la **scoa** [scopa] e andava a **spassare** [spazzare] il pezzo di strada davanti a casa.

The orality inherent in Italian dialects makes them versatile for such experiments. Cf. for instance the blending of Italian and Sicilian that Andrea Camilleri creates:

> La signora Erminia Tòdaro, di anni ottantacinque, mogliere di un ex ferroviere pensionato, niscì come tutte le matine da casa per andare prima ad assistere alla santa missa e didoppo a fare la spisa al mercato. Non è che la signora Erminia fosse praticante per fatto di fede, lo era piuttosto per fatto di mancanza di sonno, come capita a quasi tutte le pirsone anziane: la missa matutina le serviva per far passare tanticchia di tempo di quelle giornate che di anno in anno si facevano, chissà pirchì, sempre più lunghe e vacanti (1999, p.47).

However, dialects are not the only means through which orality is expressed on paper.[18] Enrico Brizzi (1995) for instance plays with the jargon of teenage students in Bologna to produce a similar effect of "papered orality":

> In due parole tardoadolescenziali, c'era il compito di fisica e il vecchio Alex non aveva studiato *un emerito*. Morale tardoadolescenziale il giovine sciocco che durante le lezioni di fisica aveva letto Frigidaire e i giornali di musica che questa non è musica è rumore, si ritrova con capitoli sei da studiare e invece di correre ai ripari frequenta cattive compagnie e alla vigilia del còmpitus si dedica a piccoli atti di teppismo in compagnia d'un amico di quelli che perderli è meglio che (49; emphasis as in original).

This product, which is no longer orality translated onto a page of written narrative, becomes, as suggested, a translation in which the oral and the written meet, having moved away from their respective traditional positions.

"L'accès à l'écriture exige-t-il le sacrifice de l'oralité, en particulier dans les pays dits de tradition orale?" asks Arlette Chemain (1991, p.55). After a period in which the introduction of literacy seemed to confine orality to tradition and the past, writers[19] have started to go back to orality as a source to reinterpret in their works (ibid., pp.56 and 61). Orality and literacy therefore would not represent two totally separated modes, because "il existe des 'passerelles' de l'une à l'autre" (ibid., p.60). Indeed, Chemain reaches the same conclusion that Spunta has been working to, i.e. that "l'interpénétration est achevée" (ibid., p.64). The fracture between oral and written literature seems therefore to have currently been knitted together by the influence that orality is having on written literature. "Il se crée" says Chemain (1991) "une troisième littérature, ni exclusivement orale, ni exclusivement livresque, née de

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[18] At this point, perhaps one could perhaps talk of *oralities*, since it is their multifaceted nature that finds its way through translation to meet the written.
[19] Chemain quotes Bernard Dadié and Birago Diop (1991, p.61).

la fusion des deux traditions, orale et écrite" (67). In the end, one realises that orality has not only always been translated and still is, but that the interaction of oral and written is alive and, in some recent written narratives, it shows that it has overcome any sign of antithetical divide.

5.2.2. Writing orality

The interaction between the written and the oral does not exclude wanting to direct one's attention specifically to oral features, in which case choices have to be made in order to bring in the foreground such features in translation. One of the first to discuss ways of representing orality on paper is Dell Hymes (1977), who postulates that the narratives of Chinookans are structured in terms of lines, verses, stanzas, scenes and acts (431). He also notes that the elements analysed are not regulated phonologically or grammatically, both aspects that would be expected in versification (ibid., p.438). Chinookan verses[20] do not appear to follow stress and syllable counting or syntactic parallelism, but rather to obey repetition within a frame: "I use the term *measure*" explains Hymes, "because the material does not consistently exhibit either phonological regulation of lines... or grammatical regulation of lines... Not lines, but what are here called 'verses', however, appear to be the pivotal unit" (ibid., p.438; emphasis as in original). Hymes therefore calls this kind of verse "measured verse" (ibid., p.431).[21] Since measured verse characterises American Indian narratives, it follows that they should be reproduced as items of

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[20] And, according to Hymes, also Native American oral narratives in general (1977, p.438).

[21] Hymes notes the importance of such organisation, since it enables the reader to consider Native American texts as literary art (1977, p.448). Furthermore, he points out that narratives and epics have one aspect in common: they both have to deal with constraints (1994, p.330). In epics the constraint is a metrical line, i.e. it is a constraint internal to the line and involving syllables, stresses, tones, etc.; when the constraint is internal the composition is generally recognised as poetry (ibid., pp.330-31). However, most narratives of Native Americans show a constraint external to the line, i.e. a relation among lines representing verses (ibid., p.330). Nonetheless, Hymes suggests that if poetry is generally determined by an organisation in lines, then the poetic nature of oral narratives is substantiated by

poetry rather than in block paragraphs as in prose (ibid., p.340).[22] Hymes's suggestion that American Indian narrative responds better if treated as poetry may be extended to other oral narratives, too. Chiara Crepaldi's collection displays a spatial organisation that can be read as poetry, instead of a series of block paragraphs. Cf. the following:

On tempo

a gh'ièra 'na bestia che ièra ciamà el lòo

'na bestia feroce la ièra!

La ièra 'na bestia forte, come chi can lupi grandi cussita,

e l'è 'ndà in te 'na stala e el ga magnà i vedèi,

el i ha magnà tuti![23]

(Crepaldi 1986, p.218; narrator Luigi)

In this excerpt, Crepaldi spatially organises utterances following the narrator's pauses in speaking, and this gives the narration a rhythmic pattern. This rhythmic pattern is further emphasised by the repetition of specific phrases within utterances. For instance, in the first three lines the repetition of *'na bestia* ("a beast") and *ièra* ("it was/there was") stresses the frightening presence of an alien and dangerous creature with which the story begins, but it also gives the narration some sort of cadence. In his collection of oral tales from the Veronese area, Dino Coltro (1991)

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their same structure (ibid., p.331). Hence, two types of poetry can be recognised: one based on metrical verses, the other one on measured verses (ibid.).

[22] However, Anthony Mattina (1987) maintains that Hymes's approach does not contribute to the differentiation of narratives from other types of talk, because "Hymes reduces all talk, including oratory and song, to blockable linguistic matter" (136). On the contrary, Mattina suggests that verse is *not* the rule for all Native American narratives: "not all North American Indian Narrative is verse, any more than all of English literature is dialogue" (ibid., p.137).

[23] Once/ there was a beast that was called *lòo*/a wild beast it was!/It was a strong beast, like those wolfhounds so big/and it went into a cowshed and it ate the calves/it ate them all!

displays a similar spatial organisation, where the rhythm of narration is stressed by new lines and new paragraphs. For instance:

> Na olta gh'era on omo poareto,
>
> el resta vedovo co on buteleto e na buteleta,
>
> – cossa fazo mi qua co sti picinini el dise,
>
> bisogna che me trova na dona,
>
> e zerca de chi e zerca de lì,
>
> finché el la g'ha trovà,
>
> el g'ha trovà na dona vedova anca ela co na buteleta,
>
> i s'ha sposà e i buteleti iè vegnui grandi,
>
> ma la buteleta de lu la iera bela come el sol,
>
> la buteleta soa de ela la iera bruta come el colera.[24]
>
> (Coltro 1991, p.218)

This rhythmic structure is even more evident when compared with the interlingual translation that Coltro provides for the story:

> Una volta c'era un uomo, poveretto restò vedovo con un bambino e una bambina, «cosa faccio da solo con questi figlioli ancora piccoli, devo trovarmi una moglie», e cerca di qui e cerca di lì finché la trovò, era anche lei vedova con una bambina, si sposarono e intanto i bambini crescevano, ma la sua figlioletta era bella come il sole, la figlia della moglie era brutta come il colera.[25]
>
> (ibid., p. 643)

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[24] Once there was a man poor thing/he is left a widower with a boy and a girl/what am I going to do with this little kids he says/I must find myself a wife/and looking here and there/he finally found one/he found a woman a widow herself with a girl/they got married and the kids grew up/but his girl was as beautiful as the sun/her own girl was as ugly as cholera.

[25] Coltro's Italian translations are not given a predominant position in his collection: they appear toward the end of the book, in the "notes" section, and do not attempt a reproduction of narrative rhythmic structure. There is a specific reason for this. Coltro's main concern is to lay emphasis on dialect, seen as a means through which orality is expressed. Thus, the central part of the book is entirely devoted to stories in vernacular, which Coltro intends to be read and appreciated as such,

What Hymes, Crepaldi and Coltro are displaying is an attitude that sees narrators as poets and their output as a particular type of poetry whose rhythm needs to be retained in translation. Highlighting the peculiar structure of orality and trying to represent it on the page as poetry points to an approach may be seen as somehow in between that of letting the oral and the written interact, and a "stricter" performance-oriented stance, where verbal and nonverbal features are represented through graphic elements.

Dennis Tedlock is one of those who have attempted such an approach. Basing his work on the possibility of translating performance, Tedlock (1983) examines ways to represent poetic and dramatic features, convinced that "a translation of an oral narrative should be presented as a performable script" (62). Tedlock suggests borrowing some literary conventions from poetry and drama, as these are indeed produced to be performed orally (ibid.). Hence, pauses are represented by line breaks as in poetry (or by double spaces in the case of a long pause), a high voice tone by exclamation points and other unusual features by notation in parenthesis and comments in the left margin (ibid., p.46). Other graphic solutions include capital words for loud voice, bracketed indications for soft voice, different tones, or gestures, split lines and spilling letters for glissando, and long dashes for prolonged vowels (ibid., p.20). In the following example, given in SL (Zuni) and TL (American English), a faster speech delivery is signalled by reproducing the passage without breaks or interruptions (first two lines), whereas the slowing down of speech can be perceived in shorter or interrupted lines, in some cases even formed by one or two words (dots indicate longer pause).

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without explicative footnotes or interlingual translations, somehow making their original voice

SL version

...

Aateya'kya——koholh lhana

•

ist

an lhuwal'an

an kyakholh

imat lhatakky'an aakya. Lhatakky'an aana

imat paniinas'ist

uhsi lak'ist

wi'ky'al'anholh lesna paniina uhsist lak

•

k'uushin yalhtan uhsi tewuuli yalhtookwin holh'imat ky'alhkonholh yemakna.

TL version

...

They lived on——for some time

•

until

from the village

his uncle

went out hunting. Going out hunting

he came along

down around

Worm Spring and from there he went on toward

•

the Prairie Dog Hills and came up near the edge of a valley there.

(1983, p.49)

"resound" in the reader's mind.

Tedlock's model has been criticised for giving too much emphasis to nonverbal features and to how to represent them on paper,[26] not taking into account the style of the TT. Eric Montenyohl (1993) notes a lack of clarity in the supposed goal of Tedlock's model (166). If the purpose is to represent the original performance as strictly as possible, using only original texts would be more apt; in fact, print conventions might work better if applied to the original performance rather than to an interlingual translation (ibid.). If, on the contrary, the purpose is to follow a target-oriented approach and present verbal art to a different audience, the system of notation would appear rather peculiar, because typographical conventions have been formulated on features of the original performance, not on how the text would be performed in the TL (ibid., p.169).[27] The result is an odd product, which is not a scholarly study of the original performance, nor a presentation of a performance in the TL (ibid.). Leif Lorentzon (1997) stresses the fact that Tedlock's translations are somehow decontextualised, i.e. they lack the social context of narrating (10). The speaker's vocal features are accurately represented, but the audience does not appear in notation (ibid.).[28] Eric Montenyohl (1993) presents a proposal for a new format and suggests a contextualization carried out through a personal narrative, where one resorts to a personal experience in order to tell the audience about the culture in question (176). Using a narrative model has the advantage of giving the readership a text in which there is no gap between the scholarly report and the narrative itself (ibid.). In addition, since one relates a personal experience, data would not be accumulated and quantified as in a scholarly report, but would be an integral part of

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[26] Ibrahim Muhawi (1999) argues that Tedlock's system of notation prejudices the readability of the text, being too complex and elaborate to the point that "... the resulting text would be so encumbered with signs that its complexity would detract from its readability" (228).

[27] Leif Lorentzon (1997) argues that graphic conventions in Tedlock's translations are based on the SL and this would create a text which appears difficult to understand (10).

[28] The reason, according to Lorentzon (1997), lies probably in the quiet participation of that particular audience; however the interaction between speaker and listeners should not be ignored, since there are cultures where this aspect is very important and often shapes narration (11).

the narration (ibid.). Finally, the need for peculiar printing conventions would not be so strong, because oral and written traditions are both familiar with narrative (ibid.). To illustrate this approach, Montenyohl provides the following example:

> Several years ago, one of the folklore graduate students at Indiana University invited a number of others over for a birthday party. The host's apartment was soon crowded with twenty-odd grad students along with a number of spouses, dates, and friends. ... Small groups formed in several areas, primarily in the kitchen and the living room. One of the groups (of which I was a part) stood in the living room, alternating occasional jokes with complaints about particular courses and professors. As another couple entered the room, one person asked "*How many hillbillies* [residents, presumably natives of Kentucky] *does it take to change a light bulb?*" (I began to smile, anticipating a clever response.) "*None. Why would people with no electricity bother to change a light bulb?*" The joke was greeted with a modest amount of laughter and was followed by another light-bulb joke in response. (ibid., pp.176-77)

Montenyohl thus presents a record of a performance in context, and links background information with the performance itself, conveying both in the form of a narrative. The difference with Dennis Tedlock's approach is subtle, yet it reveals another way of looking at oral events, prioritising context and leaving vocal elements in the background. However, despite the differences between his and the other approaches so far presented, they all share as a *leitmotiv* the willingness to retain the individual character behind orality. Dell Hymes does so by stressing poetical performance, Dennis Tedlock prefers to concentrate on verbal and nonverbal features, whereas Eric Montenyohl lays emphasis on context, but they all seem to underline the importance of reproducing this character in print.

5.2.3. Beyond words: images and sounds

The diffusion of audio and video recorders has contributed to broaden the possibilities of translating orality and having a product that conveys several aspects of the original performance. It is certainly true that resorting to audio and video recorders helps eliminate some of the constraints that paper brings along. Nevertheless, one has also to consider a change in the audience; in other words, that particular relationship developing between performer and audience disappears, substituted by a new and different one. In addition, each medium bears its constraints. "With audiotape", note Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1999) "all of the gestures are lost. We no longer know what the storyteller looks like, and how he or she uses facial expressions and other body language to tell the story" (6). Aurora Milillo (1977) admits that the use of tape recorders represents a methodological change from 19th-century pen and shorthand notation, because it allows to record oral features whereas hand notation did not (14). However, she also acknowledges that recording, no matter how it is done, is usually biased by an attitude that sees orality as a "document" to be engraved on some kind of medium:

> Se è vero, per esempio, che la registrazione è l'unica forma oggi accettabile di restituzione del documento, è però anche da sottolineare che il documento – pur se registrato, cioè ridato con il massimo di fedeltà possibile – se isolato resta ugualmente insufficiente: in ultima analisi anche l'impostazione di ricerca che privilegia il documento è improntata a un pregiudizio etno-centrico, a una mentalità letteraria... (ibid.).

Andrew Wiget (1987), on the contrary, seems to consider the use of videotapes as a final solution to paper constraints. In his performance analysis of a Hopi story, Wiget maintains having drawn inspiration from Dennis Tedlock's method, but he also

makes clear that the script should be taken as a mere instrument of analysis, not as a substitute for a videotaped story, which represents the primary text, because "... such a script approximates the performance at best; it is designed only as an instrument of analysis" (ibid., p.298). Wiget stresses the importance of a videotaped record because it allows viewers to detect verbal and nonverbal features, enabling them to produce a full script (ibid., p.318). His approach shows that the production of a written text is no longer considered the sole testimony of orality, but that a co-operation of media can prove helpful, as it helps produce a more detailed analysis of the event. Through the use of images, Wiget accounts for several nonverbal frames, such as environmental frame, role-switching and audience response, as well as for nonverbal elements like iconic gestures and kinesics. As he notes, these elements "... are the first to be lost when a speech event is transcribed", despite any effort "... to enliven the narration with adverbs or adverbial phrases to compensate for the loss of these features..." (ibid., p.326). However, it has also to be added that videotaped records may present other problems. For instance, audiotapes only require a player and are therefore nowadays of easy use. Videotapes on the contrary (or digital videos, for that matter) need a more complex apparatus including a video player and a screen, which makes their use not so accessible in any situation. As Brenda Farnell (1995) notes, audiotapes are easy to use, inexpensive and universally available, but the view of the different features of orality is limited to aural components (7). On the other hand, videotapes allow the representation of a wider range of components, but may be hindered by the use of different standards and formats, like VHS, 8mm, etc. (ibid.). Magnetic tapes are not, however, the only means of conveying sounds and images. As Cruikshank (1999) suggests, the spread of electronic technologies, such as CD-ROMs, DVDs and the Net may offer an alternative to reproduce oral performance (114). Since electronic media can display both sound and visual images,

as well as actual motion, they can cast a better light on the modalities of oral performance (ibid.). For instance, Brenda Farnell (1995) had gathered a rich corpus of videotaped material and had to face the problem of how to make all that information easily accessible without resorting to "static photographs in a book..." (7). The result of her dilemma was the creation of an interactive ethnographic CD-ROM (9). The main advantage Farnell highlights, in comparison with a magnetic tape, is that users become somehow "involved" in the performance, as they are given the possibility of taking decisions such as "... where to go in the program and how long to spend with any particular visual image..." (ibid.). The use of CD-ROMs, seems to suggest Farnell, empowers the user with its decision-making process more than a magnetic tape, though as in videotapes its use require a specific machinery and may be limited by different operating systems (ibid., p.7).

Another possibility of translating orality is the Net. Steve Cisler (1999, online) notes that orality is present in the Net in a variety of fields, from oral history to storytelling,[29] to poetry and digital radio stations. Language preservation can be another reason for putting oral material on the net (ibid.). The association "Union Ladina del Cadore de Mèdo" for instance has a website with a section ("Le vos dei Ladins del Cadore") devoted to audio recording of short interviews in Ladin.[30] Despite its success however, the Net presents some problems, too. "... What may be common in Silicon Valley or Paris or Bangkok" argues Cisler, "may be too expensive, illegal, or impractical in Bali, Bogota, or Tunis" (1999, online). Clearly, orality in the Net depends on the availability of a connection. In addition, the constraints of audio and visual formats do not get totally solved, though as already

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[29] For instance, Ambleside has an oral history site (*Ambleside Oral History Group*) at http://www.aohg.uk/ (login 30/9/2005), and BBC has a digital storytelling site (*Capture Wales*) at http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/capturewales/ (login 30/9/2005).

[30] http://www.ladinia.org/home.html (login 30/9/2005).

mentioned interactivity can play a role in bringing the receiver closer to the original source.

Finally, a way to record orality is one that combines print and visual effects: comic strips and comic books. Gorla and Luini (1998) identify in comics a transition element from the written word to the audio-visual language of the motions (13). Analogously, Gino Frezza (1999) recognises in comics a prototype of multimedia interaction, because

> ... la successione e la predisposizione di disegni che s'intrecciano con la scrittura figurata sulle tavole e strisce non danno un testo definito, bensì una sorta di *consolle di comando operativo* che consente al lettore di definire e *attuare* un testo... La forma con cui la tavola/striscia intreccia vari sensi audiovisivi... è solo un punto di partenza, dal quale s'inaugura un processo teso a rendere attuale la zona virtuale di percezione dell'immagine-movimento... (17; emphasis as in original).

Francis Lacassin (1982) describes comics as being characterised by a technique that exploits the coexistence of different visual levels (expressing rhythm, sound, and image) to present a harmonious multi-effect final product (14).[31] Rendering a story in the form of a comic allows images to convey a sense of immediacy (although they are not in motion) that words on their own often cannot achieve. Graham Smith (1987) has interviewed Art Spiegelman, the author of *Maus*,[32] which was the outcome of a dialogue between the author of the book and his father, who acted as a narrator. This form of documenting a narration poses new problems for the

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[31] "La technique spécifique de la bande dessinée se caractérise par un découpage du récit visuel en plans exprimant une durée très courte et dont le montage obéit à un rythme obtenu par la manipulation du format de l'image e de l'angle de vision. La structure du récit est fondée sur une imbrication harmonieuse du son (paroles bruits) et de l'image, celui-là figurant à l`intérieur de celle-ci" (Lacassin 1982, pp.13-14).

[32] First published in the 1980s, *Maus* retells through images and narration the experiences of its narrator (in the book disguised as a mouse) during the Holocaust (Raffaelli 1997. p.50).

translation of orality, for instance the fact that oral material has to be limited in order to be fitted into a balloon (Smith 1987, p.28). However, it also has interesting advantages, e.g. a sense of immediacy conveyed by drawing different facial expressions. Such immediacy is also promoted by the large use that comics make of kinetic lines (depicting movement) and iconic symbols (drawing a bulb to indicate a brilliant idea, stars to show physical pain, or flying hearts to represent love), as well as by the outline of the balloon (a cloud to indicate thought, a broken line whispered words).[33] As an example, a fragment of the narration recorded and used in chapter 4 is given here. The narrator is telling how her two cats were frightened by the noise of fireworks and firecrackers. To provide some comfort for the animals, she had put them in an enclosed space, covered by a blanket. Every now and then she would check on them, to see that they were not too scared. In the following, the narrator is remarking that, when she lifted the blanket to check on the cats, they looked up curiously, as if wondering what was happening outside. Transforming narration into a cartoon gives the advantage of reproducing not only words, but also images, even selecting the focus one wants to represent. In the first two illustrations focus is on the narrator, and the gestures accompanying her narration are somehow reproduced:

[33] For a theoretical and practical reflection on comics and their characteristics, see also Peeters 1998.

It is however also possible to change the "camera" angle and to give emphasis to the object of narration. In this case the illustrations provide a view on the mind of the narrator, explicitly depicting what is not visible, but only narrated:

As mentioned, such an approach has advantages and disadvantages. As with all other media, this does not represent the perfect solution either. However what is worth pointing out is that advantages or disadvantages here are neither more nor fewer than any other medium, and that it is an approach which, in some cases, is worth considering.

5.3. Is there a best approach?

As already argued, when seeing orality as characterised by individuality one has also to bear in mind that this individuality may be expressed in different ways in translation. For instance, in the above discussed translation approaches some choose to represent performance aspects, some aim to preserve vernacular elements, some prefer to introduce narrators with a brief description. Individuality seems to be constantly present, albeit in different ways. The approaches so far presented focus on

specific aspects of orality. One can say that they are effective insofar as they are able to solve a specific problem (though several others may be left out). This specificity of objectives suggests that different approaches can be evaluated not by comparing one to another, but by isolating each of them and analysing them as single approaches within a specific framework. In this light, identifying an ideal means of translating orality, one that is better than the others, is not a constructive operation. José Ortega y Gasset (1937/2000) notes that since translation[34] serves the purpose of carrying the reader toward the original, it follows that "diverse translations are fitting for the same text" (62).[35] The original text is made up of several "dimensions" that a translation cannot convey all at the same time; yet, it is possible to create different translations, each fitting the dimension one needs to highlight (ibid.). As mentioned in chapter 4, translating orality can be seen as a process in which the TT acquires a life of its own and obeys rules that may not be found in the original, despite being still connected to this latter through its translation nature. As a matter of fact, the various approaches so far discussed show that orality has indeed been differently translated according to the needs and the beliefs of the circumstances. This is why it is difficult and rather hazardous to say that one means works better than others.[36] Even by translating only the contents of a performance one is making a choice based on priorities. "If all that is of concern is what the story is about" remarks Dell Hymes (1992), "and if one believes that what it is about is not affected by an original structure, of course, that is all right" (87).

As often argued, orality is a complex phenomenon that elicits different responses in translation. Emphasis has been laid each time on oral/written interaction, sound,

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[34] Ortega y Gasset is referring to interlingual translation.
[35] And André Lefevere (1992) notes that "different types of reader will require different types of translation" (6).
[36] William Frawley (1984/2000) contends that "... a respectable theory of translation must abandon notions of good and bad (and fidelity) in recodification" (261).

pictures, poetical nature, nonverbal elements, readability. It is at this point that TS can provide insight, if not a solution. Hans J. Vermeer's skopos theory calls for a functional approach to translation. According to Vermeer (1996), "the translation is meant to serve its intended purpose in the target-culture as well as possible..." (6). This intended purpose is, in Vermeer's terms, a *skopos* (ibid., p.7). "The point" explains Vermeer, "is that one must know what one is doing, and what the consequences of such action are..." (1989/2000, p.223). Knowing what one is doing and being aware of the consequences are crucial elements in the analysis of translated orality. For instance, in the introduction to her collection of folktales, Chiara Crepaldi (1986) states that her work attempts to "... scoprire una gerarchia di motivi e di funzioni che possono anche sconfinare in tutta la catena parlata e non essere contenute nel solo testo..." (17). Since "non si è inteso assolvere ad un compito strettamente scientifico (linguistico-dialettologico o storiografico)...", Crepaldi justifies with her stated objective the interventions she performs on her collected stories: "eliminazione delle ripetizioni, delle divagazioni e delle interiezioni che potevano appesantire la lettura; aggiunta della punteggiatura, del soggetto, del verbo, dei complementi sottintesi nei periodi troppo lunghi..." (ibid., p.18). "What the skopos states" explains Vermeer (1989/2000), "is that one must translate, consciously and consistently, in accordance with some principle respecting the target text" (228). The functionality of translation is a concept that helps explain the resort to different perspectives for translating orality. If "... it is not the source-text and/or its surface structure which determines the target-text and/or its surface-structure, but the skopos" (Vermeer 1996, p.15), then the approaches examined in section 5.2. can find an answer in their own skopos.

Marina Spunta's analysis of orality in Italian narratives shows the presence, within a written means, of elements which are specific to orality. There is no trace in the

narratives of any attention to nonverbal features, yet the writing reveals the presence of an individual orality in the figure of the author/narrator. The skopos, in a collection like Spunta's, is identifiable in the intention to underline such presence and to discuss a writing that has come out modified from the encounter with orality. The action of transferring oral elements into the domain of writing responds to an attempt to experiment with different language modalities in order to show that the two fields can interact and produce something that is neither exclusively oral nor exclusively written and, as such, constitutes a "tertium quid".

Chiara Crepaldi's main goal is to identify a set of common themes in folktales. Her skopos is not to highlight performance, and her translations bear no traces of the interaction between verbal and nonverbal behaviour which is typical of performance. Nor does she aim to produce a folktale book, but rather to give voice to a particular interplay. Her skopos is to put in the foreground themes and narrative framework by stressing the relationship between narrator and narration: "... ho creduto dunque di indirizzare l'attenzione più che ai testi verso la comprensione di un rapporto, quello tra narrante e narrato" (1986, p.17). In order to fulfil such skopos, Crepaldi devotes to each narrator a chapter, which is formed by an introduction containing impressions on the narrator (first name is given and used throughout the chapter) and on the interviews (carried out with a tape recorder); the story or the stories, narrated and translated in dialect; a summary of each story, in Italian; a textual analysis.

Like Crepaldi, Dino Coltro presents stories in vernacular. His objective however is slightly different. His main concern is dialect itself, seen as a "carrier" of a past tradition that Coltro is trying to rescue from oblivion. Interested in the anthropological value of stories, referring to a past where orality played a binding role in rural society, Coltro structures his book so as to reveal this interest, giving

stories alone a foreground position and dividing them into areas of origin.[37] As in Crepaldi, narrators are important, but here as repositories of tradition more than as narrative agents. Coltro sees his dialect as a heritage to be preserved and remembering becomes the skopos of his collection, which is fulfilled by providing instruments that help not to forget: an introduction describing the world of orality in a rural past tradition, the stories in vernacular and a conclusive note with interlingual translations in order to draw those who are unfamiliar with such language closer to their own origins.

Dennis Tedlock's skopos is to give shape to a "performable translation" (Krupat 1992, p.17), a translation highlighting the very instant of performance with all its distinctive traits. The focus is not on stories, but rather on the process of narrating. Such skopos is attained by recurring to graphic elements meant as a guide for reading aloud what had originally been oral. Anthony Mattina (1987) suggests that Tedlock has given too much emphasis to the representation of performance, ignoring other aspects, such as the representation of original rhythm (number of syllables, word order) and anything that could interfere with the flow of performance (130-31). It is a criticism that can certainly be countered by keeping Tedlock's model framed within skopos theory. As long as a translation skopos is defined, any approach responding to that particular skopos is a valid approach. Skopos theory is not, as a matter of fact, an all-permissive model.[38] Indeed, it is a case-specific model that sets clear boundaries as to what is allowed or not allowed in translation. When one breaks out of those boundaries, one enters a territory that is not skopos theory any longer.[39]

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[37] Coltro divides the Veronese area into eight sub-areas of research: Val d'Alpone, Val d'Illasi. Valpolicella, lago di Garda, Valpantena, Pedemontana, Bassa and Valli Grandi (1991. pp.833-35).

[38] As suggested by Peter Newmark (2000) when arguing that "to exclude any moral factor except loyalty, added on as an afterthought by Nord... is pretending too much and going too far" (259).

[39] In this light, Mattina's criticism that Tedlock, despite working on Zuni narratives, has been looking for a universal method of representing orality on paper and insisting that all North American Indian narratives should follow that system of notation (1987, p.131) makes sense, because it points to an attitude going beyond the frame of its own skopos.

Skopos theory brings the process of translating orality into focus. Far from being a theory that allows indiscriminately any type of translation, skopos theory urges to consider the circumstances requiring such translation. Orality, as often mentioned, has a fluid nature and can take different shapes, seeping in fields that are normally alien to it. Depending on the shape it will take in translation, it is bound to raise a series of problems. For instance, if the "shape" is writing down a performance, the problems will be referred to how to represent verbal and nonverbal features; if the "shape" is a comic book, the problems will involve reducing the amount of words to fit in a balloon, while at the same time conveying through pictures as much information as clarity allows. By following a functional approach, it is possible to see in the multiplicity of problems a multiplicity of choices. When one chooses a direction, one establishes a goal to reach and moves according to that goal (skopos). The very fact of having such goal, automatically narrows down the range of possibilities, focusing the action on the goal in question. Thus, if the phrase "translating orality" appears too vague, its skopos makes it specific and produces a translation that, far from being "good" or "bad", is a translation responding to that circumstance.

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Shifting attention to a differently perceived source raises new problems and new perspectives. Substituting the idea of "folklore" as preserved by an anonymous collectivity with individuals brings in the foreground elements that had only been theoretically dealt with in the 19th century, e.g. the presence of verbal and nonverbal features, with an array of approaches that span from modifying the written text to "accommodate" orality, to using graphics and symbols in order to represent vocal or

gestural cues, and thus emphasise the presence of the individual behind a narration. This awareness of individuality in orality, together with that of narrative complexity and technological availability, allows a rethinking of the idea of medium. as paper is no longer the only way to record orality. Resorting to audiovisual media can be credited with casting even more light on the issue of individual presence, but it has also shown that these media do not represent a final solution, as each of them brings along its own problems. Although these different approaches may lead to wonder whether one is better than the other, in the end the question seems to go unanswered. However, there is also a way out. Resorting to TS, and particularly to skopos theory, one realises that this dilemma cannot be solved unless one also considers its variables. By looking at the circumstances in which a translation takes place, one is able to determine what instruments and what solutions that specific translation requires. A functional approach to translating orality therefore is helpful in the sense that it does not identify *the* best translation method in abstract terms, but rather it contextualises the process, taking into account different points of view and allowing to choose from a variety of paths responding to the requirements of the case.

Coda

6

ORAL SOURCES, FROM COLLECTIVITY TO INDIVIDUALITY

It was my fault and

I don't blame him either.

I could have told

the story

better than I did.

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Storyteller* (1981, p.98)

Silko weaves stories of women being kidnapped by strangers and returning home only to find that their husbands have moved out, abandoning them. Yet, "it was my fault... I could have told the story better than I did"; the narrator blames herself for not having thoroughly fulfilled her role of storyteller. This passage shows how crucial narrating can be in a given culture. It suggests a sense of responsibility that is individual in character and that puts emphasis on narrators and their oral skills. Narrating then becomes a creative act, as it gives the course of events a particular turn. Penny Petrone (1990) remarks on the importance of the spoken word in Native American traditions, highlighting its power "to make things happen" (10). Such power implies that the spoken word is not a mere conveyor of meaning but holds a potential for affecting reality (ibid.). In this sense, "telling a story" does not simply mean uttering a sequence of words and producing vocal vibrations; it means operating a change in the surrounding environment, in other words *producing* something. The assumption of an individual responsibility however is not without consequences. As discussed in chapters 2 and 3, there have been periods in history when orality was not associated with a single individual, as in the example taken

from Silko's passage, but from a collectivity that was excluded from the creative act of shaping an oral product, being considered merely as a repository of a national (and therefore collective) cultural heritage. Silko's passage then reveals a responsibility that varies from culture to culture and from time to time, because it is an element that implies individuality, and individuality in orality has not always been taken for granted.

This chapter actually acts as a musical coda, pulling together the two elements so far analysed (collectivity and individuality) to explore further consequences of their different perception. As seen in the 1st movement, collectivity seems to have been fostered by a nationalistic view that identified orality with folklore, i.e. with the output of a collective "folk".[1] On the other hand, the 2nd movement showed an orality moving away from these esoteric concepts of "folk" and argued that at the root of any oral event there is an individual, whether belonging to a group or not. The two movements showed that altering the way one perceives such sources has an impact on the translation of their output. The first movement showed an orality that was given the shape of folklore collections, i.e. specimens of oral elements (tales, rhymes, riddles, proverbs) gathered in books without any trace of narrators (absence of verbal/nonverbal features, descriptions, names), laying therefore emphasis on the cultural value of these elements, rather than on their artistic ones. The second movement argued how, on the contrary, contemporary translations display an attention to extralinguistic elements that reveals an accomplished passage from collective to individual, from folklore to orality.

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[1] If such a view of the sources of orality in the 19th century responds to notions of national identity, it is however also a view resting on shaky grounds. Penny Fielding (1996) even recognises in the 19th century the starting point for a phenomenon that she calls "bifurcation of orality", where orality was either seen as the product of an idealised "folk" (therefore symbolising the stability and quietness of the rural countryside undermined by industrialisation and social disruptions) or was demoted as to represent the product of a social class characterised by immorality, illiteracy and unrest (22-23 and 44). As discussed in chapters 2 and 3, the idealised oral, stemming from the "folk", can be seen as the

Given that perception appears a differentiating factor, it seems necessary to discuss it in more detail, examining the consequences and potentialities of collectivity and individuality. Section 6.1., then, discusses the motives that urged 19th-century intellectuals to develop a notion of "folklore" as deriving from a collective mind. These motives have been identified in the development of European nationalisms, and in particular in the impact that German thinkers had on the formation of a "folk" consciousness and on the growing interest towards all that was traditional and national. However, this tendency also had the effect of viewing folklore as something "of public domain", i.e. as a heritage that was created by the whole nation and, as such, belonged to the whole nation, thus allowing no space for questions like who owned the material collected or who could be considered its author. On the contrary, exploring individuality in orality has the consequence of calling attention to the issue of authorship. Whether an individual performing a narrative can be called an author or not, is a rather complex question. In section 6.2., this chapter presents two slightly different perspectives, one arguing in favour of authorship, the other viewing individuals as "owners" of their own oral material. Section 6.3. on the other hand resumes the idea of authorship, but seeks to present it under a different light, that of a creativity inherent in the act of performance, thus viewing authorship as an immanent element tied to a specific oral event.

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answer to anxieties born out of industrialisation, urbanisation and social changes that had upset

6.1. FOCUSING ON COLLECTIVITY

6.1.1. Folklore as a collective heritage

According to the Folklore Society,[2] the term *folklore* refers to a concept grouping together several aspects of vernacular culture and cultural traditions.[3] According to the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (1966), *folk* means "people", "race", and *lore* "teaching", "doctrine", "learning". Gillian Bennett (1993) notes that in the present day, there is a tendency to disregard the original meaning of *folklore*, especially as regards the first part of the term (77). *Folk* as a specific group of people belonging to a specific class and with a specific education or location would be no longer the standard meaning, as it has become clearer that anyone could be "folk" (ibid.). The term *folklore* therefore can be used to refer to any group of people in any social setting (ibid.). However, as noted in chapter 1, section 1.1.1., choosing to use the term "folklore" entails a specific point of view which may have become obsolete, resulting in the avoidance of the same. The problem seems to lie particularly in the sense of "otherness" that the word *folk* conveys, with its rural connotation of a remote world (Bennett 1996, p.216). Clearly, the reasons that urged William J. Thoms to create such a compound in the 19th century were dictated by a different view.

Folklore, the lore of the people, was indeed "the good Saxon compound" Thoms had in mind when he first suggested the term in 1846 (1999, p.11).[4] According to Alan Dundes (1999), Thoms's suggestion of using the word "folklore" instead of "popular antiquities",[5] in use up to that moment, reveals a nationalistic sentiment[6] that would

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traditional structures (ibid., p.5).

[2] http://www.folklore-society.com/, login 8/2/2003

[3] Music, drama, songs, narrative, customs, beliefs, medicine, arts, etc.

[4] For a 19th-century definition and analysis of the term *folklore*, see Harland and Wilkinson 1867.

[5] Of which the Latin origin is evident.

be often associated with 19th-century folklore research (9).[7] Nationalism seems in fact to have characterised the increased attention towards oral material in the 19th century.[8] This nationalistic sentiment is clearly visible when Thoms (1846/1999) claims "... the honour of introducing the epithet Folk-Lore as Disraeli does of introducing Father-Land, into the literature of this country" (12).

The idea of nation and the consequent evolution of nationalistic ideals represented a new political and cultural experience in 19th-century Europe (Sabbatucci and Vidotto 2002, p.86). Until the end of the 18th century, "nation" was a concept with a hazy outline and a generic meaning, because the sense of belonging was directed more towards local or regional communities (ibid.). Nevertheless, as Abigail Green (2001) suggests, during the 19th century nationalism emerged as a specific phenomenon and became the political *leitmotiv* throughout Europe, with influences that crossed borders and had repercussions on other states (1). One could then say that those nationalistic spurs managed to go beyond national cultural boundaries and to export elements that "morphed" according to local parameters. As far as orality is concerned, the consequence was the birth of a perspective that celebrated an anonymous collectivity as the repository of a glorious national heritage, folklore. In England it gave birth to a folklore centred on myths of the past, where the "folk" was seen as its best representative and took the shape of a repository of national cultural heritage. In Italy it generated a folklore stemming from a previously

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[6] Dundes (1999) notes that this nationalistic underlying meaning impeded (at least in the beginning) a general acceptance of *folklore* in other countries, for instance Germany, where *Volkskunde* was preferred (10). In Italy the suggested terms included *tradizioni popolari* and *demopsicologia*.

[7] Despite the fact that Thoms was an antiquarian, not a folklorist in the strict sense of the word (Dundes 1999, p.9).

[8] Roger Sale (1978) explains that what in the 19th century was given a specific nationality, did not really exist, because tales and oral material arose when the sense of community had yet to develop the idea of "nation" (29). This could explain the recurrence of motifs in various areas belonging to different nations. "A girl is in a wood" exemplifies Sale. "Give her a brother and one has 'Hansel and Gretel', give her many brothers and sisters and one has 'Hop o' My Thumb', send the girl to dwarves and one has 'Snow White', to bears and one has 'Goldilocks', to grandmother and one has 'Little Red Riding Hood'" (1978, p.29).

fragmented reality, and yet incarnating also the hopes for a future of national unity. Nevertheless, these seemingly different directions taken by English and Italian folklore have one thing in common: their European roots. The developing interest towards the idea of "*Volk*", and the promises of cohesion it held for a nation in the making – Germany, had direct repercussions on the movement of antiquarianism in England (see chapter 3, section 3.2.1.) and on the *Risorgimento*, the Italian political movement for unification.

6.1.2. "Das Volk" *and its implications*

As mentioned, the nationalistic ideas slowly taking shape in the German territories appear to have had an influence on the moulding of a European national conscience, through an idea of *Volkskunde* that was nationalistic in nature (Bauman 1992, p.29).[9] In the last decades of the 18th century, a German nation did not exist except in the ideals of educated people, as the majority of the people simply remained within the restricted reality of their peasant environment (Schulze 1985, p.47; see also Waller 1990, p.100). A popular concept of nation was lacking, because the basis on which to build such a concept was lacking, too (Schulze 1985, p.47). "In 1830 there was no political definition of Germany" explains Bruce Waller (1990), "… nor did those living in what was to become the German Empire have much notion of what Germany was" (100). Not only politically and economically, stresses Michael Hughes (1988), but also psychologically the idea of Germany was a very distant and hazy one (37).[10]

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[9] According to Theodore Jorgenson (1933), although folk literature is oral in nature, once it is written down it becomes property of the "nation", rather than of the "people"; it acquires a different form and a different life (102).

[10] The French Revolution seems to have had a great impact on the minds of German intellectuals, who saw in the idea of a united nation an answer to the dismemberment of a German country (Schulze 1985, p.48; see also Whaley 1997, p.21). As a consequence, in 1789-90 unrest took place in the territories near the French borders, while in Saxony riots reached dramatic levels in 1790, also because of poor harvests (Blackbourn 2003, p.40). At the time, a sort of common ground existed

Though one can say that German nationalism really began to develop only after the Congress of Vienna (1815), in the works of thinkers such as Herder the seeds had already rooted and sprouted. Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), considered a sort of "father" and a pioneer of German nationalism, developed a sense of nationality that was based on patriotism, and he himself was defined as a patriot "... in an age when the feeling of national patriotism was dormant" (Ergang 1966. p.113). As Herder (2002) suggests,[11] "everyone who is on the ship in the flooding waves of the sea feels himself obliged to aid, to preserve, to save the ship. The word *fatherland* brought the ship afloat to the shore; he can, he may, no longer… stand idly by in the ship and count the waves as though he was on the shore" (375). Herder sought to awaken a sense of German culture that was the expression of German life, i.e. it represented folk ways, literature and language (Ergang 1966, p.117). His nationalism found its expression not in race, but in culture and environment (intended in geographical terms), as well as in terms of historical development and folk character (Hayes 1927, p.723). Hence, a specific culture makes a nation, but the opposite also holds: a nation gives shape to a specific culture (ibid., p.726). This culture, in Herder's view, had to be genuinely German, as a mere imitation of a foreign culture could only create an altered product (Ergang 1966, p.118; see also Beiser 1992, p.206). For German culture to be genuine, it had necessarily to be expressed through German language (Ergang 1966, p.148). This is a rather drastic

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between France and Germany in the form of a social crisis caused by overpopulation, feudal privileges and pauperism (ibid., p.41). Nevertheless, in Germany the crisis never reached the levels it had reached in France, and German revolts were kept local by the country's very political fragmentation (ibid., p.42). In addition, the events following the Revolution dampened German revolutionary enthusiasm and led to a new appreciation of the Empire and the traditional values it embodied (ibid., p.43; see also Hughes 1988, p.22). Furthermore, Napoleon's successful advance and the wars against Prussia gave birth to an anti-French sentiment which would evolve into a basis for nationalism (Schulze 1985, p.49; see also Whaley 1997, p.32), although it must be added that at the beginning such sentiment was caused by heavy taxation more than by a genuine national feeling, whose idea was still unclear in the minds of the population (Kowohl 2000. p.332). On the impact of the French Revolution and the German reaction to French domination, see also Carr 1991a, esp. chapter 1.

[11] *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (1793-7) (excerpt on patriotism).

change, considering that at the time the language in fashion among the wealthy classes was French, and that German was considered inelegant, coarse (ibid., p.140). Indeed, the German nobility disdained their cultural heritage, and turned instead to France and its cultural models (Fox 1987, p.565). Herder, on the contrary, believed that language was a reflection and an expression of the national soul,[12] and as such had to be an essential part of a national revival (Ergang 1966, p.150):

> If then each original language which is the native growth of a country develops in accordance with its climate and region, if each national language forms itself in accordance with the ethics and manner of thought of its people, then conversely, a country's literature which is original and national must form itself in accordance with such a nation's original native language in such a way that the two run together (Herder 2002, p.50).[13]

A common language then is a fundamental aspect of a nation. Through language one can become aware not only of one's inner self, but also of the thoughts and feelings of past generations (Barnard 1965, p.57). Hence, "Germanness" in Herder's times had to be rediscovered through German language, following a process of self-consciousness (Gagliardo 1969, p.144). The importance of a national language seems to grow when emphasised by the existence and celebration of a cultural tradition expressed in such language. This emphasis and its effects can be seen for instance in the enthusiasm with which the brothers Grimm collected and presented tales as elements of a glorious national heritage (see chapter 3, section 3.1.2.). A cultural tradition based on language and shared by a specific group transforms that group into a *Volk* (Barnard 1965, p.57). Thus, a *Volk* was, in Herderian terms, a

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[12] Similarly, Melchiorre Cesarotti (1785) maintained that "la lingua appartiene alla nazione, il dialetto alla provincia. La lingua si forma di ciò ch'ella ha di comune, il dialetto di ciò che v'è di particolare" (25).

natural division grounded in a language whose distinctiveness one had to preserve (ibid., p.58).[14] In this light, language itself became a channel for transmitting tradition to the generations to come, conveying the purest expression of culture through the voice of the folk (Bauman 1992, p.30).

The concept of *das Volk* was, in Herder's vision, rooted in a distant past and represented a key element for the moulding of nationhood. The literature that expressed the genuine, original and spontaneous character embodied by this group was, indeed, folk literature (Ergang 1966, p.196). In that literature the name of the author does not seem to have mattered, since the author was just a means through which the national soul expressed itself (ibid.).[15] In Herder's view, however, *Volk* seems not to have referred to the uncultured rabble, but to a group that had retained its national foundations without giving in to foreign influences (Ergang 1966, pp.195-96; see also Bendix 1997, p.47). "There exists in the state only a single class: the *people* (not the rabble) – to it belongs the king as much as the farmer, each in his place, in the circle destined for him" (Herder 2002, p.364; emphasis as in original).[16] Interestingly, this way of seeing the *Volk* was later reflected both in English and Italian notions of their respective popular elements. In England the "folk" was somehow juxtaposed to the "masses", negatively connoted and bearing frightening resemblance with the social threat of the working class; in Italy the "*popolo*" became the positive face of a medal whose reverse was represented by the *volgo*.[17] Nevertheless, it has also to be added that Herder recognised in the unsophisticated

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[13] *Fragments on Recent German Literature* (1767-8) (excerpts on language).
[14] W. Nicolaisen (1995) argues that the English *folk* and the German *Volk* do not coincide exactly, because the English term lacks the nationalistic overtones of the German *Volk* (72). Alan J. Mazo (1996) however specifies that "Old English *folc* had a wider semantic range than modern English *folk*, including the sense of 'nation' retained in German *Volk*..." (107-108).
[15] Such a notion finds an explanation in the idea that the *Volk* is an organic whose constituent parts are the individual citizens (Barnard 1965, p.63).
[16] *Letters concerning the Progress of Humanity* (1792) (excerpts on European politics).
[17] Herder's conceiving of the *Volk* is also present in Giovanni Berchet's view of "*popolo*", expressed in his 1816 *Lettera semiseria di Grisostomo al suo figliuolo* (see chapter 2, section 2.2.4.).

masses those who more genuinely retained the German soul, as they had remained untouched by conventions and artificiality (Ergang 1966, p.197). To explain this, one has to bear in mind that Herder identified two types of *Volk*: the bourgeois and the intellectual (Barnard 1965, p.74). The former constituted the most numerous group, but also the truest part of the *Volk* (ibid.). Within that group, Herder included farmers, artisans, fishermen and small traders; in a word, all those less affected by urban civilisation (ibid.).[18] "The peasant as *Volk*" says John G. Gagliardo (1969), "… had become the great guarantor not only of moral integrity but also of national identity: without him, there was no nation" (149-50).[19] Herder's view, then, seems to present a sort of nostalgia for a way of life that was disappearing through urbanisation and that looked back at an old order to be preserved through the celebration of what was the most genuine, somehow the most "German" part of German culture (Fox 1987, p.566).[20]

As mentioned, the "condensation" of feelings related to nationalism and tradition allowed these feelings to cross borders and to encourage the formation and growth of similar spurs in England and Italy, where different reasons saw the birth of concept like "folk" and "*popolo*". The "folk" responded to what one could call "the voice of the past". It was the consequence of an uneasiness with the changes of the time and reflected an attempt to restore a "golden age" that was felt as lost or in the process of disappearing. The "*popolo*" on the other hand represented a call to look to the future. It incarnated a multiplicity of voices from various parts of Italy, converting them into a choir singing in praise of a newly unified nation. As was argued in chapter 2, both

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[18] Who however remained distinct from the urban and rural proletariat mentioned above.
[19] Peasantry, argues Gagliardo (1969), was favoured not only because it spoke German, but also because it had resisted the corruption that foreign words could bring into its speech (148).
[20] This preoccupation with origins, which was particularly influential in the German areas of the late 18th and 19th centuries, witnessed the development of historical linguistics, in an attempt to rediscover through an original language the roots of humanity. The "discovery" and diffusion of Sanskrit, attributed to Sir William Jones and H. T. Colebrooke, became, for European linguists, the means through which the kinship linking linguistic families could be finally proved (Brincat 1986, p.135).

these collective ideas implied that the collectivity did not produce, it merely repeated what had been handed down. Folklorist Alessandro D'Ancona (1835-1914) was convinced that "... il popolo nostro al dì d'oggi non canta, ma ripete: non inventa, ma riproduce un tesoro di versi, a cui per tradizione è affezionato; ed anche credendo di improvvisare, ei rimescola e riunisce immagini e versi sparsi in varj componimenti" (1906, p.206). Denying the creative potential of the "*popolo*" underlined the fact that folklore was a "common property" and, as such, it represented a treasure to be stored for preservation.[21] However, it can also be seen as an important indicator of how translation was going to be carried out. As shown in chapter 3, the folklore that was collected on the page, both in England and Italy, did not bear any trace of individual elements, despite the fact that several folklorists acknowledged the existence of an individual narrating voice. Possibly, then, the reason may be that such a mark of individuality appears insignificant if compared to the importance attached to concepts like "folk" and "*popolo*". The perception of orality as folklore, i.e. as a collective product meant as a national heritage seems to have been so strong that it left no space for individuality, thus rejecting any "property" that was not collective.

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[21] Regina Bendix (1997) sees in the gathering of folktales in books a process of itemisation of songs and tales, transformed into readable, "tangible" goods (48). Julie Cruikshank (1992) points out that in early anthropology the collection of material objects and of spoken words presented a common aspect: both were considered as material items to be collected (5). "Spoken words", says Cruikshank "... become *things* when they appear on paper, on artefacts or when they are recorded in magnetic or digital codes on tapes or disks, or in film or videotape" (ibid., emphasis as in original). As Georgina Boyes (1993) notes, this approach was also supported by the development of an imperialist politics that had an impact in the country of origin, highlighting a social stratification which kept researchers and objects of research well apart (9). "... The beliefs and customs of the 'primitive' natives abroad"

6.2. FOCUSING ON INDIVIDUALITY

6.2.1. The "authorship" hypothesis

As mentioned in the introduction, part of the theoretical background for the analysis of translated orality has been taken from a performance-oriented approach. This approach can be credited with casting a light upon individual oral performers. The presence of an individual behind a narrative opens up the possibility of viewing these individuals as "authors"[22] of oral production. This is not unproblematic. The author of a book is, generally speaking, always a human being, an individual, or a group of individuals. So is the author of a song, of a painting, or a software program. The matter, however, becomes less obvious when the authored product is oral. One could venture that a modern notion of authorship linked to copyright questions has become dominant. Marshall McLuhan (1962) acknowledges the existence of a specific idea of authorship associated with the product as private property, and notes that typography had the effect of drawing attention to sources rather than to outputs (130-31). Identifying authorship as an "... individual effort related to the book as an economic commodity", McLuhan (1967/2001) adds that it "... was practically unknown before the advent of print technology" (122). Such approach to the question of authorship is somehow also present in Roland Barthes' view of the author as a "... modern figure, a product of our society insofar as... it discovered the prestige of the individual..." (1977, p.142-43). McLuhan had identified in typography the point from where the individual had started acquiring more visibility; Barthes sees this starting

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argues Boyes, could provide a context "from which the 'fragmented' practices of 'backward folk' in England could be 'scientifically' reconstructed" (ibid., pp. 9-10).

[22] Being aware that using the word "author" in relation to orality somehow breaks with the association author-writing, I introduce the idea by putting the term in inverted commas. This however is only done once, because the term is not intended here as a metaphor.

point in capitalist ideology (ibid., p.143). Both, nevertheless, acknowledge that the author is a figure that dominates the product.[23]

However, in the last analysis, "what is an author?", asks Michel Foucault (1975). The *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (1966) defines "author" as "originator, inventor" and traces the word back to Latin *auctōrem* (*-or*), from *augēre*, namely "increase, promote, originate". According to Foucault (1975), the author is "... the one who explains the presence of certain events in a work, as well as their transformation and their diverse modifications" (610). Foucault also adds that the author is "... a nucleus of expression which, in more or less perfected forms, is evident in all his works, his rough drafts, his letters, and fragments" (ibid.). A sense of individuality emerges from these two definitions; Foucault argues that the concept of authorship represents "... a strong moment of individualization..." (ibid., p.604). And "if an individual is not an author, can one say that what he has written, or *said*... could be called a work?" (ibid., p.605; emphasis added).

Indeed, throughout history there have been voices in disagreement with an idea of orality stemming from a collective mind. Joseph Jacobs (1893) objected to the idea that a saying, a proverb, or a tale could have been uttered for the first time by a collectivity and believed that there must have been some kind of initiator among the crowd, regardless of the fact that, with time, the identity of this individual had faded away from memory (234). Jacobs could not imagine popular tales being invented by the "folk" and was convinced that they must come from one single artist (ibid.). In this sense, he believed in individual artistry and maintained that one must always search for the individual behind the tradition, the proverb, or the tale, because "... it was some bucolic wit... who first raised hearty guffaws by those homely pieces of wisdom" (ibid.). A similar stance was taken in the first decades of the 20th century by

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[23] Until Barthes (1977) decrees its death in the presence of the reader (148).

Benedetto Croce (1929), who compared *poesia popolare* (orally derived and of assumed popular origins) and *poesia d'arte* (considered the creation of an established poet) and, though admitting a difference between the two, suggested that this difference was a matter of degree, not of quality[24] (3). Croce did not agree with the belief that *poesia popolare* was an anonymous product generated by a similarly anonymous people; on the contrary, he firmly believed that no poetry had a collective origin, because its creation required the presence in the beginning of an individual poet (ibid., pp.1-2).

The authorship hypothesis could be supported also by making a parallel between cinema and orality. John Caughie (1981) suggests that, although a film is produced collectively, it nevertheless acquires value when it is associated with the work of a specific director, especially when this director is considered an artist, an "auteur" (9). Alexandre Astruc (1968) underlines the communicative nature of cinema by calling it a language and defining language as "... a form in which and by which an artist can express his thoughts... exactly as he does in the contemporary essay or novel" (18). Using the expression "caméra-stylo", Astruc suggests that in New Wave cinema[25] the distinction between author and director fades away, because direction goes beyond a mere illustration of scenes and becomes a creative act: "the film maker/author writes with his camera as a writer writes with his pen" (ibid., p.22). In a similar way, one may say that in orality the distinction between author and narrator fades away, because both concepts imply a creative act.

According John Niles (1999), the physical presence of the narrator acquires great significance as the element that justifies the existence of stories, and that sustains the collective memory of the story itself (63). In this light, narrators do more than merely

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[24] In Croce's word, *essenza*.

[25] For an introductory presentation of the main features of the French New Wave movement, see Marie 1997.

repeating what has been transmitted; they become the authors, the source, the reason for a story to come into being. "Stories" maintains Niles (1999), "do not exist fully... except in the physical presence of those who tell them" (65). If so, one could argue that narrators are the creators and thus the authors of the stories told in a particular moment. Nonetheless, in fairness it has to be added that the character of such authorship is a debatable issue. For instance, Jack Goody (1977) points out that the individual's role in the process of creation of oral material is peculiar, because it gets absorbed by a collectivity who is not the author but who, having a strong influence in the transmission of such material, tends to stand out against any individual character (27). In Goody's approach, then, the question seems not to be so much that authorship in orality does not exist, as that it acquires a different aspect (ibid.). Interestingly, the 19th-century collective character of folklore appears to retain an influence on the evaluation of an authorial element in orality. By stressing the role of collectivity, Goody reveals how the imprint of "folklore" still exerts an impact over the way one conceives of oral sources. This nevertheless does not help trace the actual sources, i.e. that "initiator among the crowd" Joseph Jacobs had imagined, since saying that these initiators' voice may be absorbed by a collectivity does not imply erasing their existence at a certain point in time. A shift in focus is thus required.

6.2.2. The "ownership" hypothesis

So far a discussion of the issue of authorship has been attempted from the point of view of scholars evaluating the products of narrators. It would however also be interesting to see how narrators consider their output. Chiara Crepaldi's work (1986)

on first-person testimonies, reveals curious attitudes.[26] Narrator Amelia[27] for instance, feels that stories should be properly told, choosing the right words and phrases, or else they lose their efficacy: "Quando il marito, vedendola esitante di fronte a certi dettagli, la incalzava perché li dicesse pressappoco, lei si mostrava scandalizzata: – *No! Ne me piase!* – e rivelava così quello che può essere un suo criterio estetico..." (28). The fact that Amelia appears shocked at the idea of an inaccurate rendering of her stories reveals not only an aesthetic criterion, but also a responsibility, a sense of belonging, a feeling that, as a narrator, one is telling something that becomes one's own "creature". This sense of belonging hints at an aspect that may be viewed as an alternative to the authorship hypothesis discussed above: the idea of *owning* one's stories. Amelia sets great store by her narrative heritage, to the point that she feels the need to excuse herself for not being able to provide a more appropriate performance (27). In this sense, Amelia reveals the importance of owning a narrative repertoire and of performing it well.

Julie Cruikshank (1998) presents a complex example that well exemplifies the idea of owning stories. Having worked with Angela Sidney, a storyteller from the southern Yukon territory, she relates how Sidney, during a specific event, had felt entitled to narrate a story and to give this story as a gift to her son; she had done so because the story belonged to her clan and therefore to her, too (37). Being challenged on this point by elders of another clan, who maintained that the story did not belong to her clan and that therefore she had no rights over it, Sidney was able to

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[26] Crepaldi's work is an attempt to recover and revalue the vernacular narrative tradition of the Italian area of *Polesine*. Through her narrators' stories (*fiabe*), Crepaldi gives voice to a typically oral language that, in her view, laid hidden and maybe forgotten, but which is still alive (1986, p.14). The book presents eight narrators: Amelia, Antonietta, Elisabetta, Zenaide, Ilario, Luigi, Sara, and Ferdinando. Each of them has been telling several stories, recorded on magnetic tape (ibid., p.15). The stories, which appear in vernacular, are followed by a brief summary of their content and preceded by an introductory description of the narrator in question.

[27] Narrator Amelia is described as a woman who had spent her life working on a farm, an environment where she was able to pick up that tradition which was perceived as authoritative and therefore had to be followed with great precision (Crepaldi 1986, pp.27-29).

demonstrate that the opposite was the case and that her use of the story was appropriate (ibid., p.38). The episode is rather revealing, in that it shows that there are cultures in which orality implies more than "speaking"; it implies that stories represent a material property whose use is determined by property rights and is a prerogative of the owner.

In her paper "That's Not What I said: Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research" (1991), Katherine Borland discloses a similar sense of belonging on behalf of her narrator. Borland attempts to interpret a narrative from the point of view of feminist theory, but soon she realises she has to face a dilemma, in which she, as a feminist scholar, is torn between the revaluation of narrators' viewpoints and her approach to narratives, an approach influenced by her own attitude and resulting in an interpretation that may not be substantiated by the sources of narration (64). "What should we do" asks Borland, "when we women disagree?" (ibid.). In Borland's paper, the researcher interpreted the narrated episode from a feminist perspective; nevertheless, her narrator utterly disagreed with the version, and she rejected the "revised" story as no longer belonging to her:

> Not being, myself, a feminist, the "female struggle" as such never bothered me in my life. … So your interpretation of the story as a female struggle for autonomy within a hostile male environment is entirely YOUR interpretation. You've read into the story what you wished to – what pleases YOU… The story is no longer MY story at all (ibid., p.69-70, emphasis as in original).

In this example the narrator is quite explicit about what she considers to be her "property". The story is an episode in her life, it belongs to her, it is *her* story, and she feels entitled to disavow the written version because, due to a different interpretation, the story does not belong to her any more.

The sense of belonging that emerges from these examples is a feeling that may take a different shape and intensity, but that nevertheless represents the reason that allows performers to "use" and "mould" their stories according to the situation. In this sense, the borderline between authorship and ownership becomes hazy and allows an encounter between the two concepts, as they have in common the fact that a story belongs to a performer, who is then responsible for it and feels entitled to make a creative use of it. However, it must also be said that not all narrators see their repertoire this way. For instance, in Crepaldi's collection the question of ownership does not present a unanimous response, as not all narrators display the attitude that Amelia disclosed in the example above. Narrator Ilario, for instance, shows little regard for his narrative heritage and, says Crepaldi, "una volta mi disse francamente che per lui le storie che cercavo di raccogliere erano tutte stupidaggini..." (1986, p.143). Narrator Ilario's introductory notes are scanty, somehow revealing Ilario's opposition to Crepaldi's effort in collecting stories. Ilario displays a rich narratological repertoire, but his rejection, notes Crepaldi, prevented such repertoire from becoming a fluid, integrated exchange of traditions between narrator and researcher, ending up as a mere succession of answers (1986, p.143). Having said this, however, it must be added that looking down on one's own stories does not mean rejecting their property. Ilario considers the stories he is narrating as rubbish, but he does not explicitly deny owning them. Owning something also leaves the person free to value it or despise it.

6.3. IMMANENT CREATIVITY IN PERFORMANCE

Performance is a mode that has proved useful and versatile for oralist studies, to the point that Regina Bendix (1997) even talks about a "performance revolution" (194)

Performance has been defined as "a mode of spoken verbal communication" consisting "... in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence" (Bauman 1977, p.11). Since orality is a product of human beings,[28] a performance-oriented approach to orality helps shift attention not only to the process of performance, but also to the source of this performance, namely the individual, who becomes responsible for her/his output. Performance has also been described as suggesting "... an aesthetically marked and heightened mode of communication, framed in a special way and put on display for an audience" (Bauman 1992, p.41). From this definition one can already see how the concept of performance embraces several aspects, among which are aesthetic, linguistic and social elements.[29] Since performance is an aesthetic phenomenon requiring the assumption of responsibility on behalf of performers, it follows that performers bring into performance an individual creative dimension that varies from performer to performer and from context to context. Performance thus acquires an ever-original quality that converts it into an event each time created anew for a specific audience in a specific environment.

Having worked with performers of oral traditions, Albert Lord (1960/2000) is able to conclude that "the anonymity of folk epic is a fiction, because the singer has a name" (101), and explains that "singing, performing, composing are facets of the same act", because a performer (or a singer, in Lord's terms) is "... a creative artist making the tradition" (ibid., p.13).[30] Lord talks about creativity and composition, but he also states that "the idea of an original is illogical" in oral tradition (ibid., p.101). Indeed, he argues that in oral tradition words like "author" and "original" somehow have a

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[28] In John Niles's (1999) terms, "homo narrans".

[29] As Elizabeth Fine (1984) points out, the performance of an oral text is "more than words" (1).

[30] And it is worth noting that in this discussion Lord intentionally makes use of words like "creative", "creation", and "making" to suggest that performing and composing take place at the same time and that there is an active intervention on behalf of the performer.

different meaning, one that is related to each performance, because "the author of an oral epic, [that is, the text of a performance], is the performer, the singer before us", and because "a performance... is a creation, not a reproduction, and it can therefore have only one author" (ibid., p.102).[31] A similar position may somehow be recognised in Jack Goody's idea of an oral product as a canvas, on the bottom of which was once added a signature that has disappeared under the action of many hands (1992, p.14). If so, one can say that all those hands "reworking" the painting have indeed touched it up to the point that each time a "new" painting was created by a hand that, in the case in point, became the "authoring" hand.

Robert Kellogg (1973) however disagrees with the idea of orality as an authorial work and views it as characterised by formulaic language, repeated themes and standard metaphors, emphasising not its creative aspect, but its fixed structure (57). Oral activity, he suggests, is highly conventional, i.e. it hardly presents any attempt to subvert traditional forms, and performances generally show this conservative nature (ibid., p.58). Basing his argument on Albert Lord's perspective discussed above, but drawing a more clear-cut line between author and narrator, Kellogg indeed agrees that the very nature of orality lies in its performance (ibid., p.57). Nevertheless, he also suggests that it has no author, because each time it is created anew: "... the 'work' exists only as it is embodied in performance, is created anew each time it is heard, and therefore has no 'author'" (ibid.).[32] Kellogg believes that behind each performance lies "... not the mind of one author but an ideal performance, an aspect of the tradition that is shared by performer and audience alike" (ibid., p.58). Comparing the performer to somebody reading aloud a hypothetical piece of written literature, Kellogg sees a single performance as *la*

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[31] It is also important to note that here Lord explicitly uses the word "author" to refer to an oral performer.

[32] Though it is difficult to think of a created element without a "creator".

parole and tradition as *la langue* in Saussurean terms, stating that "... the whole tradition is the 'author', the ideal unperformed song or story is the 'work', and the performer is the 'reader'..." (ibid., pp.58-59). Orality, seems to conclude Kellogg, needs recording, shaping and editing in order to resemble an authorially composed written text (ibid., p.63). [33] This perspective is however questioned by Jack Goody (1992), who warns against "... the danger of falling into earlier errors of romantically inclined nineteenth-century scholars who contrasted the communal composition of ballads with the individual creation of lyric poetry" and who recognises in Kellogg's approach a "... misapplication of the idea of deep structure...", not so different from an approach that identifies sources with a collective entity (14-15).

As mentioned in the introduction, during the seventies and eighties, a number of scholars[34] developed an approach that treated orality as a performance-oriented discipline. Many of the recorded oral texts of the past were based on a text-centred perspective, which did not convey all the features[35] that form performance. According to Zdenek Salzmann (1993), the advent of the performance-oriented approach brought a shift of focus from text, genre and structural analysis to the study of performance, event and style, as well as of the link between verbal art and the

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[33] However, Kellogg (1973) also notes that the question becomes slightly problematic when one deals with medieval works such as *Beowulf* or the *Nibelungenlied*, which were not traditionally associated with a specific author and are formulaic in their style (63). The fact that these works are highly praised and integrated into the literary system would suggest that they were produced by a single author, who recorded them onto the page. On the other hand, they are praised precisely for their oral characteristics, for which they fall within the field of oral tradition (ibid.). Kellogg's answer to this puzzling situation is to treat those works not as the product of a single author, but as versions of ideal works traditionally existing in a given community (ibid.). In this sense, what we now read would be the result of a co-operation that gave birth to a finished, written form which however must be approached bearing in mind not an author but an ideal oral telling (ibid., p. 64). Jack Goody (1992) comments that similar approaches are misleading and present the same problems as those that see a vague spirit of "the folk" as the collective author of orality (15). The danger here is to account for the existing differences (versions or variations) by introducing the concept of an unanalysable process such as that of an ideal version (ibid.).

[34] Among others, David Antin, Dell Hymes, Jerome Rothenberg, and Dennis Tedlock.

[35] For instance, one of these oral features is the particular use of time. Livia Polanyi (1982) notes that, while in written texts events necessarily take place at a time which is not the same as the moment of reading, in oral storytelling the formulation of a message and its decoding by an audience occur at the same time (166-67). This does not mean that a narrator cannot talk about past or future events, but

society within which it is produced (244). Salzmann identifies a number of principles and assumptions characterising this approach. Taking storytelling as an example, he notes that "every storytelling is a communicative event", with a storyteller and an audience; the communication process is normally carried out face to face and the interlocutors make use of both acoustic and visual channels (ibid.). He also argues that "every storytelling event is a social experience", i.e. there is at least one individual who acts as a storyteller and another who assumes the identity of listener (ibid.). These identities entail some duties both from the storyteller, who is expected to convey a culturally appropriate performance, and the listener, who has to respond accordingly (ibid.). A further point sees in every storytelling a unique event,[36] because, given its close dependence on a specific social setting and its particular impact on its environment, it is an event that occurs only once (ibid., p.245). Despite this specificity however, "storytelling events exhibit degrees and kinds of similarities", which allow the events to be grouped under criteria that are relevant for a particular culture (ibid.). These principles establish a link between orality and the actors (performer and audience) who perform it, and they set narratives in a concrete and specific environment rather than in a theoretical void. It is precisely in this environment that one can perhaps see a relation of authorship between performers and their performance. Given that a performance is a communicative event with a certain degree of responsibility towards an audience, its *mise en scène* may be seen as being authored by somebody's creative potential.

Ruth Finnegan (1992) remarks how the idea that orality lacks individual creativity leads to the predominance, within the collected material, of the researcher, to the detriment of the narrator (227). The treatment of orality as a collection of data to be

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rather that the moment at which the story is performed coincides with that at which it is perceived by the audience (ibid.).

analysed, partly accounts for the scant importance given to a single speaker, regarded as a mere vehicle for information (Cruikshank 1998, p.40). In one of the examples quoted in section 6.2.2., narrator Angela Sidney had used one of her stories for a specific purpose. Her subsequent retellings of the same story in different situations show that oral narrative represents a communicative process tailor-made for different situations (a gift to someone, a commemoration, etc.) and that each occasion adds a specific meaning, thus emphasising the creative role of the narrator: "her [Sidney's] point, in retelling stories about Kaax'achgóok [character of her stories] is precisely to show that a good story, well used, can not merely explain but also add meanings to a special occasion" (Cruikshank 1998, p.41).[37] Cruikshank suggests considering oral narrative as a social activity[38] rather than a set of objects hidden in a text whose meaning is fixed and uninfluenced by different performers; meaning does not have a fixed nature but varies according to social interactions between the tellers and their audience, taking a sort of dialogical form (ibid.). If so, one may argue that individual creativity does play a role in the shaping of a narrative. Jan Vansina (1985) stresses this aspect of responsibility and creativity, stating that "the teller and public are creating the tale together" (34). Oral events are seen as the outcome of a co-operation between performer and audience (ibid.), who therefore become the authors of a specific performance in which a story takes shape.[39]

Authorship, ownership and creativity in performance should not however be understood as concepts locked in watertight compartments, isolated from one

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[36] Talking about traditional Native American narratives, Penny Petrone (1990) confirms that "each telling was a unique event" (13).

[37] Another example is Chiara Crepaldi's above discussed collection of recorded narratives, where Crepaldi acknowledges the contribution of her narrators by dividing her work into sections, each with a number of stories introduced by a description of their narrator and of her/his style.

[38] The use of the word "activity" highlights its inherent dynamic processes. Linda Dégh (1995) uses the word "biology" to describe "... a change in concentration from the static view of artificially constructed and isolated oral narrative sequences, to the dynamics of telling and transmitting stories from person to person" (47).

another. On the contrary, their borders meet, their territories communicate and merge. Describing the work of the storyteller (*contafole*), Dino Coltro (1998) remarks that "ogni narratore si sentiva non solo esecutore dei testi che trasmetteva, ma anche 'autore' e quindi autorizzato a modificarli" (155). *Contafole*, notes Coltro, do not repeat by heart what they have heard; they enrich and modify with their own ideas, their beliefs and creativity the material they have acquired (ibid., p.158). The figure of the storyteller, suggest Borghi and Vezzani (1988), cannot be reduced to that of somebody passively repeating their repertoire, as storytellers are poets who infuse creativity in their stories, and who do so through composition and performance (15). Similarly, Ruth Finnegan (1988) stresses the changeable nature of orality, where performers modify their output according to the type and requests of the audience, rather than following a hypothetical original version (69). This suggests that the oral cannot be separated from the individuals who take part in its creation, as these are responsible for giving stories a particular character. In this sense, the idea of authorship becomes a factor related to a specific individual performing in a specific space-time context, and acquires an immanent quality by virtue of its close association with a specific performance.

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According to Georgina Boyes (1993), the construction of a concept of "folk" characterised by a rural and uneducated nature allowed 19th-century British folklorists to keep a gap between themselves and their informants, thus avoiding any reference to the role of individuals in performance (14). Being uncreative and a mere repository of what had been handed down from past generations, the folk "… had no

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[39] Ruth Finnegan (1988) agrees that oral literature depends on the direct interaction of performer and

individual rights of ownership in what was clearly a heritage of the nation as a whole" (ibid.). Finding their roots in the German idea of *Volk*, the English "folk" and the Italian "*popolo*" were seen as collective entities from which folklorists gathered items of folklore that belonged to the nation and thus did not pose problems of establishing who was the author and how to translate the material in such a way as to adhere to the shape given by the author to its "creature". Hence, 19th-century folklore material on the page took a distinctive aspect that privileged contents over form and ignored any trace of individuality in the transmission of oral material. On the contrary, a shift from collectivity to individuality, with its emphasis on individual performers, allows other issues to become visible, and leads one to wonder whether these individuals can be considered, under different points of view, as the authors of what they have produced. The result is that a focus on single performers highlights not a lack of creativity, but the presence of a personal flavour, an individuality that emerges in narration and needs to be preserved in translation. In this chapter individuality in orality has been used to present three possible ways of viewing oral production: authorship, ownership and creativity in performance. These three hypotheses do not operate on different planes, nor do they dwell in different territories. As branches of the same tree, they all share the same assumption, the possibility of calling an oral performance *one's own* and of using it accordingly. The authorship approach does so by drawing oral narrative closer to an idea of written literature, whereas ownership stresses the idea of physically owning one's oral output. Both hypotheses cover, I admit, a wide territory, perhaps too wide to allow a precise position. Creativity in performance on the other hand attempts to solve this problem by limiting the field of action to a specific performance by a specific

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audience (18).

individual. By bringing in the foreground the uniqueness of such event, this approach highlights therefore the potential authorial nature inherent in its artistry.

CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to explore whether and to what extent a translation can be affected by the attitude that translators have towards *oral sources*, namely people in the act of telling a piece of orality (stories, anecdotes, tales, jokes, proverbs, nursery rhymes, riddles, etc.). It argued that through such attitude, translators exert an influence on their product, contributing to the particular shape translations may acquire. The initial hypothesis therefore suggests that by projecting onto oral sources their viewpoint, translators produce translations that are specifically linked to their *perceptions* of the sources. As such, translators' perceptions, which may be altered by various reasons (cultural, social, historical), tend to modify the resulting translations, shaping them accordingly.

The idea of investigating different ways of looking at oral sources, as well as the translation of their output, came from exploring the vast field of orality, and in particular that of performance-oriented approaches to orality. One of the most discussed issues in performance-oriented studies is how to render in print the variety of elements constituting an oral event: vocal features, face expressions, gesture interaction between narrators and audience, environment and environmental response. By examining discussions on the problems of reproducing all this material on the page, one started to view this operation – often referred to as "transcription" – as no less than a translating process, in which decisions about what to render on paper and how to do it were taken on the basis of social, cultural and/or ideological factors that made the process less automatic than it appears at face value.

Choosing to explore the field of orality in translation required a clarification of some basic terms. This thesis began with two worlds separated by a mirror, and attempted

to emulate Alice by exploring what was beyond the mirror, i.e. the world of the unknown, which becomes to some extent known thanks to the passage the mirror provides. In order to do so, one had first of all to abandon some traditional stances that would not have allowed a thorough exploration of the world behind the mirror. For instance, in the attempt to clarify what one intends here with "orality", it was necessary to give up any clear-cut distinction between primary and secondary oral cultures, in the belief that this division tends to create, within the oral phenomenon, a fragmentation that clashes with the fluid and all-encompassing nature one ascribes to orality. In addition, keeping it would mean denying the literate and mediated communities the right to propose themselves as sources of orality, which is not deemed realistic. This thesis therefore viewed orality as phenomenon existing in all societies and human beings, thus accepting the idea of "homo narrans" which sees in orality a characteristic of humanity in general. In a similar way, another stance that had its boundaries slightly modified is the notion of translation, precisely intralingual translation, or "transcription". Jeremy Munday (2001) notes that "it is interlingual translation which is the traditional, although by no means exclusive, focus of translation studies" (5). By taking advantage of the phrase "by no means exclusive", this thesis presented a series of reasons explaining why the notion of translation "proper" can be expanded to include other forms, besides the one restricted to the transfer from one language to another. It was argued that the passage from oral to written or in any case to a different form is actually a translation, because it implies a number of choices, decisions and processes analogous to those characterising interlingual translation.[1] As noted, the processes at work in the passage from oral to a different medium make it difficult to believe that such passage is unproblematic. It

[1] Even the act of recording a narration implies a decision-making process. One can, for instance, choose when to turn on and off the tape recorder, depending on the subject discussed (Baum 1977, p. 38). It is also possible to make speakers aware they are being recorded, enhancing in this way their adherence to the topic in question (ibid.).

was pointed out that using the term "transcription" instead of "translation" could lead to think that transferring material from oral to written form *within* the same language does not pose any translation problem, being simply a passage from one medium to another. On the contrary, it was argued that during this passage choices were made that reflected those of a human translator. For instance, when writing down an oral narrative, one has to take decisions about what nonverbal features are relevant for the event and what on the contrary can be excluded (coughing is normally irrelevant for the story, unless it reflects the state and behaviour of a character). In a similar way, when using a video-recording device, one may want to shift attention from narrators to the audience, possibly because the audience's response in that particular moment is considered relevant. What one has tried to stress is that all these are conscious decisions taken by somebody according to their attitude towards what is taking or has taken place. By seeing the transfer of oral material into a written or magnetic/electronic form as a translating process, these decisions become actions of translation.

In order to investigate the initial hypothesis, two positions have been examined, one seeing the source of orality as a collective organism, the other focusing on the individual. The first position analysed was the 19th-century notion of "folk" in England and "*popolo*" in Italy. It was argued that the social, political and economic changes that took place in the two areas gave origin to social groups that differed from those identified under the name of "folk" and "*popolo*". The features ascribed to these entities seem to have responded to needs rather than facts. It was highlighted how the English "folk" represented an answer to the discomfort caused by the subversion of an established order that England, in its industrialisation phase, had to overcome. The stress produced by such change could be solved by turning towards a past in which the term "people" did not correspond to "masses", but rather to a

"folk" seen as a repository of a national treasure, i.e. oral tradition. Similarly, the Italian "*popolo*" responded to a need to create in society a reinforcement of what had been politically and financially attained, i.e. national unity. The "*popolo*" thus represented an ideal into which Italy projected its wish to leave behind fragmentation and underdevelopment, to welcome a national unity that the influences from Europe in general and from Germany in particular had contributed to create. The English "folk" was seen as a repository of a glorious past; similarly, the Italian "*popolo*" became a repository of a tradition that was to form the foundation of a glorious future. The key word is "repository". It indicates that the organism in question is a keeper of a particular element, but it does not automatically imply that it is also its owner, let alone its originator. With this attitude, 19th-century folklorists and collectors gathered, with the intention of preserving, what the "folk" and the "*popolo*" guarded: folklore. This material was collected and then transferred on paper in an operation here considered, as argued above, an act of translation, in that it implied choices that collectors-translators made on the basis of social, cultural and ideological beliefs. The recording of 19th-century oral material onto the page acquired the aspect of "folklore" because it obeyed a perspective that saw (and needed to see) orality as a national heritage. Hence, this material reveals aspects that link it with an anonymous collectivity, e.g. the absence of any individual narrator, as well as that of verbal and nonverbal features, whose representation is associated with narrative performance and thus to the individual. The folklore represented this way therefore is the product of a translating process whose sources are conceived of as a collective, non-creative element.

The second position examined, based on performance-oriented approaches, recognised in the individual the source of orality. Focusing on individuals and their performances allowed to raise questions that were not addressed when oral tradition

was perceived as guarded by a collectivity. These questions highlight the key role of narrators, as well as the fact that the quality of orality varies accordingly and therefore directly depends on them, or rather on their skills. The effect that a narration has on the audience is the result of a series of strategies adopted through a specific use of verbal and nonverbal features, which reveal the individuality behind the performance itself. Contrary to 19th-century folklore collections, performance-oriented approaches show a greater attention to verbal and nonverbal features, which is not simply a consequence of a technological advance (though this has made sophisticated recording devices available), but is also the result of a different way of looking at orality. It was pointed out that when listening to a speaker, a narrator, a formal storyteller, etc., one is actually having a multi-perceptive experience, where the ear is one part of it and where the eye, the smell and perhaps also the touch concur in the creation of a fluid and "mouldable" event. This multi-perceptive orality is no longer considered a traditional heritage of the nation, but rather the artistic outcome of an individual moulding vocal matter in a personal way through the use of the above mentioned features. Awareness of individual oral skills may lead in turn to a different approach to translating orality, emphasising the importance of retaining both verbal and nonverbal features in translation as distinctive marks of individual narrators. A consequence of this way of perceiving sources is that, when it comes to translating this experience onto paper or any other material medium (audiotapes, videotapes, digital or electronic media), its oral character necessarily undergoes a transformation, and this has contributed to the idea that translation converts orality into a frozen (still) item. Nevertheless, it was also argued that seeing translation as a "foe of orality" that converts it into a "mummified", collectible item is an attitude that reflected 19th-century approaches to orality as folklore, rather than contemporary perspectives. The awareness of individual features in orality cannot lead to denying

any possibility of translation. In order to exemplify this, different translation approaches have been considered, each of them coming up with solutions that responded to their view of the problem. For instance, in some cases priority has been given to the graphic representation of verbal and nonverbal features, while in others focus was kept on individuals and their physical presence (e.g. using a videotape or a series of pictures). Such a variety of solutions has posed the problem of identifying the best translation approach. The problem was solved by arguing against the existence *a priori* of any best approach. In order to support this, help was found in skopos theory, according to which a translating process cannot be evaluated in a vacuum, as it needs to be set in a functional context. After establishing a purpose, it becomes easier to understand the reason behind choices that, at first, may appear unusual.[2] Finding a purpose behind a given choice in the translation of orality allows to go beyond "absolute" and decontextualised evaluations such as "bad translation" or "good translation", and to consider a translation in its environment. The circumstances examined have proved varied, yet, in the specific, they have created translations fulfilling the function they were meant for.

It can be concluded, then, that in the case of orality the point of view of translators as regards oral sources plays a decisive role in the shaping of the resulting translation. Specifically, the fact of viewing these sources as a collective entity retaining but not owning elements of national folklore appears to have led collectors to create a corpus of written folklore that bore no trace of individuality, reflecting instead the idea of a common-property heritage to be preserved. Similarly, recognising an individual imprint in oral narrative shifts attention to the personal "flavour" that performers give to their narrations and leads to look for a way to retain this flavour in translation. In addition, retaining individuality in translation somehow gives more

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[2] In this light, also the fact of treating orality as a folklore element without author is a decision dictated by a skopos, that of gathering and storing a symbol of national cultural wealth.

emphasis to the role of narrators, helping view them under the light of authorship. Indeed, this perspective gives the sources in question a creative potential, empowering their actions and acknowledging their influence over the final product. By assuming that narrators actively contribute to their output with a degree of creativity and by ascribing them a quality (authorship) that traditionally belongs to the sphere of written literature, one exerts yet a different influence over the translation of orality, obtaining a product where the concepts of oral and written are relative, and where their interaction becomes the third type of translation here depicted. The orality translated in this way opens the passage through which Alice had walked on her way to Wonderland. Alice in the end comes back and the passage becomes a mirror again. However, if one imagines just for a moment to leave it open, one may see elements coming and going from one environment to the other, from the oral to the written and vice versa.

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